

**Improving Pasifika achievement: Pasifika teachers'
expectations, experiences and perceptions of primary
school leadership**

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ABSTRACT

Pasifika success in education has been identified as critical for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand. Although leadership has been identified as a key factor in lifting student achievement there is little mention in the literature regarding leadership as it relates to the 'underachievement' of Pasifika students. This study set out to investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools and to identify specific leadership practices which Pasifika teachers perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement.

A qualitative methodology was used for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants from the primary school sector from different parts of Auckland. The participants' held various roles in schools and also had varying degrees of experience.

The data analysis revealed two major themes: (i) effective educational leadership is perceived to be essential to improve Pasifika achievement; and (ii) reciprocity is perceived to be a key component in building Pasifika success. This research study suggests that although leadership has a direct effect on Pasifika achievement there was an imbalance between leaders' intentions and their capacity or capability to improve Pasifika achievement. This is reflected in the literature and the research study, which shows that Pasifika achievement has not changed significantly in the last twenty years. Therefore current educational leadership practices are inadequate. The literature and this research study indicate that improvement in Pasifika achievement requires moral leadership and sustainability. The key ingredient to sustainability is reciprocity between Pasifika students, their families and school leaders who are the key representatives of their schools.

The recommendations arising from this research may be true for any small groups within schools not just Pasifika. School leaders and the Ministry of Education must be genuine in their intentions to improve Pasifika achievement. Genuine intentions require resolve, hard work, action, accountability and

sustainability. Sustainability for the improvement of Pasifika achievement requires moral leadership and leaders working together in a spirit of reciprocity with students and their families to develop school plans for Pasifika achievement, to monitor Pasifika progress together and demonstrate the courage to change direction if current practice is not working. There is no 'quick fix'; leaders have to persevere. In the words of a Samoan proverb:

*A fia vave o'o lou va'a, alo na o oe,
Ae a fia tuli mamao le taunu'uga
Tatou alo alo fa'atasi*

*If you want to go fast, go alone
If you want to go far
Go together*

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

New Zealand's population of Pasifika peoples is a multi-ethnic, diverse, heterogeneous group made up of different languages and cultures. The term Pasifika peoples is used to describe people living in New Zealand who have migrated from the South Pacific islands (Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tokelau, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu) or people of mixed Pacific heritages who identify with Pasifika peoples because of their ancestry or heritage (Brown et al., 2007; Ferguson, Gorinski, Wendt-Samu, & Mara, 2008, p. 25; Ministry of Education, 2013a; Tuafuti, 2013; Tunmer, Chapman, & Prochnow, 2006). Terms used to describe Pasifika peoples have changed over time-for example, Polynesians (1970s), Pacific Islanders (1980s) and Pacific Nations (1990s). Currently the Ministry of Education uses the term Pasifika peoples (Wendt-Samu, Mara, & Siteine, 2013). In the New Zealand census of 2013 the New Zealand population was grouped in this way: European; Maori; Pacific peoples; Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, Other ethnicity (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In this thesis the term 'Pasifika' will refer to Pasifika peoples living in New Zealand in the same way that the census identifies groups as Asian, European or African and so on.

My family, friends and Pasifika colleagues and I usually identify with the Pacific island our ancestors hail from. If we have to identify ourselves collectively we use the terms 'islander' or 'PI.' I am a Samoan Kiwi, Samoan through heritage and Kiwi by birth. Pasifika values are part of my makeup. Common Pasifika values include: leadership, inclusion, family, respect, spirituality, belonging, love (Ministry of Education, 2013a), reciprocity, humility, communalism and collective responsibility (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001). Fa'aaloalo/respect, alofa/love, tautua/service, fa'aleagaga/spirituality, feso'a'iga/reciprocity, gagana/language, feagaiga/covenant and the 'va'/relational space (Sauni, 2011) are the Samoan values and principles. My siblings

and I were shown and guided by our parents that if we got along (fealofani) respectfully (fa'aaloalo) with each other and that if we were true and sincere in our actions and words (faamaoni) we would be strengthened (faamalosi). We were also taught and shown that love (alofa) should be at the heart of all our interactions and that service (tautua) to others was to be strived for.

This research project reflects and respects these values. It also reflects the *Pacific Way*. The term the *Pacific Way* was first used by Fiji's Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara in 1970 in an address to the United Nations (Crocombe, 1976). Characteristics of the *Pacific Way* include talking things over rather than taking a rigid stand, being prepared to negotiate, being flexible, valuing oratory and participating in verbal negotiation and adapting. The differences between the cultures of the five million peoples of the Pacific islands are probably greater than for any other group of five million people anywhere on earth (Crocombe, 1976). Crocombe (1976) argues the *Pasifika Way* can be used either as a description of a reality that exists or as an ideal to be attained. He notes like the "American Way" the "Pacific Way" is not precise and conveys a field of meaning. The Pacific Way is conducted essentially in English and not in any Pacific language.

Elements of the *Pacific Way* are evident in the Ministry of Education document developed for Pasifika research practices, entitled *Teu le va* (Airini, Anae, & Mila-Schaaf, 2010). *Teu le va* has two meanings - in Samoan it literally means taking care of the relationship; it is also the name of a report document for the Ministry of Education that outlines research practices for Pasifika education (Airini et al., 2010). This thesis research respects both aspects of *Teu le va* - taking care of the relationship and some of the research practices identified in *Teu le va*. The *Teu le va* practices used in this thesis include engaging with stakeholders and other knowledge brokers and collaborating in setting the research framework. This thesis also involved understanding the kinds of knowledge used in Pasifika education and growing knowledge through a cumulative approach.

Rationale

The growing Pasifika population in New Zealand makes research into Pasifika education imperative. In the 2006 census Pasifika people made up 6.9% of the population (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010) and this increased to 7.4% of the population in the latest census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). By 2021 it is projected that Pasifika people will represent 12% of the younger age workforce in New Zealand, and an even higher proportion of the workforce in Auckland (Ministry of Education, 2011). The rapid Pasifika population increase makes it a “matter of urgency” (Tuioiti, 2002, p. 133) to ensure that the educational needs of Pasifika children are met across all three educational sectors early childhood, the compulsory schooling sector and tertiary education. Furthermore Pasifika success in education has been identified as critical for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009). As a result, improving outcomes for Pasifika learners is a priority for the Ministry of Education (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afai, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2012; Robinson & Timperley, 2004). The government recognises this in its continued prioritisation of Maori and Pasifika student achievement. The statistics from Statistics New Zealand (2013) and the Ministry of Education (2011) suggest that Pasifika student achievement will be an on-going focus in the New Zealand education system, and particularly so in primary and secondary schools.

In order to improve Pasifika ‘under achievement’ it is necessary to look at factors that may support such improvement. Investigating these factors is complex. Therefore, although I acknowledge that social and policy-related structures are factors that play a significant role in Pasifika achievement, the focus of this study will be on leadership in primary schools. Effective educational leadership has been identified as a key factor in lifting student achievement (Blase' & Blase', 2000; Bush, 2003; Lashway, 2006; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). For example Robinson et al., (2009) define educational leadership as “leadership that causes others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students” (p.69). Similarly Bush (2003) describes educational leadership as

leadership that influences others' actions to achieve desirable outcomes. Therefore educational leadership is recognised in the literature as playing a vital role in improving student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bush, 2003; Lashway, 2006; Robinson, 2011). The policy document, *Pasifika education research priorities: Using research to realise our vision for Pasifika learners* (Ministry of Education, 2012b) also recognises this link, and identifies governance and leadership as a key research area in the field of Pasifika education. Most of the literature on Pasifika education is concerned with the provision of services and student welfare (Brown et al., 2008). A considerable body of research also exists in the area of Pasifika student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ferguson et al., 2008; Gilmore & Smith, 2011; Robinson & Timperley, 2004) and there is a growing body of research on Pasifika parents' perceptions of education (Fletcher et al., 2009; Pasifika-Unit, 2013). However, there is a dearth of literature regarding school leadership in schools where Pasifika learners make up a significant portion of the school roll, and even less research that seeks to identify Pasifika teachers' expectations, experiences and perspectives of the educational leadership practices that lead to achievement and success for Pasifika students in primary schools.

Although leadership has been identified as a key factor in lifting student achievement (Blase' & Blase', 2000; Bush, 2003; Lashway, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009), as far as I have been able to discern there is little mention in the literature of leadership as it relates to the 'underachievement' of Pasifika students. Successive *Pasifika Education Plans* (Ministry of Education, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2007, 2009, 2012a) have goals relating to the lifting of Pasifika student achievement but do not identify how or what role educational leadership plays in Pasifika student achievement. Pasifika scholars (Pasikale, 2002; Tuioti, 2002) have called for more research and more exploration for over ten years to find answers to Pasifika student 'failure'. The role of educational leadership in raising Pasifika achievement is therefore a timely focus for research.

Educational leadership is once again in the public spotlight because of the perceived decline in educational achievement in New Zealand schools. The latest

Programme for International Student Assessment results (PISA) show that New Zealand has slipped in the PISA rankings from seventh to 13th in Reading, from seventh to 17th in Science and from 13th to 27th in Maths (Campbell, 2013). There is an increased gap between the best performing and worst performing students, which Campbell (2013) suggests is a result of income inequality. Campbell does not identify the groups of students who make up the 'best' and 'worst' performing. However, data from international surveys supports the need for stronger pedagogical leadership in New Zealand primary schools (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 55). It follows then that stronger pedagogical leadership is needed for Pasifika learners.

The *Pasifika Education Plan consultation 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2012a) makes no mention of Pasifika teachers or educational leadership. *Pasifika education research priorities: Using research to realise our vision for Pasifika learners* states that a "collaborative, co-ordinated approach to gathering quality knowledge is essential for ... improved Pasifika presence, engagement and achievement in education" (Ministry of Education, 2012b, p. 4). As stakeholders, Pasifika teachers' voices are rarely heard. When exploring the link between what Pasifika people think, and what is done, this is best done by Pasifika people who have demonstrated personal success in education (Pasikale, 2002). I have enjoyed success in education. My proposed research will add Pasifika voices (who have also had success in education) to the body of research in the field of educational leadership and Pasifika student achievement. Pasifika research should serve parallel purposes. In the first instance, it should identify and promote a Pacific worldview; and, secondly, it should simultaneously examine the assumptions that underpin Western structures and institutions so we as Pasifika researchers can make our own pedagogies (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001). This research fulfils these parallel purposes.

Another Pasifika education research tenet is that of a move away from a deficit orientation to 'strengths-based' research. A deficit orientation involves a focus on what children cannot do as opposed to what they can do. This thesis demonstrates a move away from this principle. The value of my research is that

it may offer some insights and practical strategies in relation to one of the government priorities - raising Pasifika student achievement. My research will benefit educational leaders (where Pasifika student achievement is a concern) in that it may identify leadership practices that can be adopted to improve the 'under-achievement' of Pasifika students and accelerate Pasifika student achievement and success. This research may also identify practices that have a negative effect on Pasifika student achievement. This in turn will benefit classroom teachers and, ultimately, our Pasifika tamaiti/fanau (children) and their aiga (families).

Research aims and questions

The aims of this research study were:

1. To investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools; and
2. To identify specific leadership practices that are perceived by Pasifika teachers as influencing Pasifika student achievement.

The research questions asked were:

1. What are Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership?
2. What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers' perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Thesis organisation

This thesis is set out in six chapters.

Chapter One

Chapter One is an introduction to the research project. It describes the rationale for the investigation and lists the research aims and the questions that guide the aims.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two presents a literature review that explores what has already been said about the research themes. Educational leadership, Pasifika achievement and Pasifika teachers' perspectives are at the core of the literature review.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three describes the rationale in selecting a qualitative methodology and the data-gathering method of the semi-structured interview. The data analysis procedures used for the semi-structured interview, aspects of validity and ethical considerations are also discussed.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four presents the research data and analysis from the semi-structured interviews. Emerging themes from the data collection are identified.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five contains a discussion of the findings based on the emerging themes. The key findings of the research project are critically examined and linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Six

Chapter Six completes the thesis with a summary of the overall findings of the investigation; a review of the strengths and limitations of the research; final recommendations for future practice; and possibilities for further research.

Chapter two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter discusses three themes that emerged from the literature reviewed. These themes are: (i) educational leadership (ii) Pasifika achievement and (iii) Pasifika teachers' perspectives. In regards to the first theme of *educational leadership* the sub-themes explored are: defining educational leadership; effective educational leadership; educational leadership and achievement; and educational leadership and diversity. Within the second theme of *Pasifika achievement* the sub-themes discussed are defining Pasifika education and Pasifika student achievement. In the final theme of *Pasifika teachers' perspectives* the sub-themes explored are Pasifika teachers' perspectives and aspirations for Pasifika student success

Educational leadership

Defining educational leadership

Leadership is defined as the exercise of influence (Leithwood, 2011; Robinson, 2011). Leadership is distinguished from force, coercion and manipulation by the sources of influence (formal authority, attraction to the more personal qualities of the leaders, and relevant expertise). A definitive single definition of educational leadership is problematic as there are so many differing perspectives to consider (Bush, 2003). In addition the terms 'educational management', 'educational administration' and 'educational leadership' are sometimes used interchangeably by researchers (Ramsden, 1998), some researchers differentiate the terms (Cardno, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009; Starratt, 2003), and other researchers note that the term *educational leadership* often overlaps with management and administration (Bush, 2003). What researchers appear to agree on, however, is that educational leadership is the leading of learning and teaching in school contexts (Bush, 2003; Cardno & Collett, 2004; Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2004; Weber, 1996) Educational

leaders' work involves leading and managing with a focus on an educational organisation's key task of learning and teaching (Cardno, 2012). Ultimately, educational leadership is leadership that causes people to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students (Leithwood, 2011; Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2011).

Effective educational leadership

The role of the principal and the theories of educational leadership have both changed over time. A study of North American elementary and secondary schools by Seashore, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) details the changing role of educational leaders and encapsulates what was happening generally in the field of educational leadership. The study describes the traditional role of the principal as being responsible for managing a well-run school with the emphasis on managing staff, developing rules and procedures and general building operations. Seashore et al., (2010) identify that the shift in the role of the principal began in the 1970s when effective schools were characterised as having a climate focused on learning and the high expectations and achievement of students. By the 1990s the principal's role was viewed as being less about 'management' per se, and more about 'instructional leadership'.

The emergence of this 'instructional leadership' concept signaled two changes in the field. Firstly instructional leadership focuses on how leaders can influence teaching and learning through what researchers describe as direct and indirect leadership (Cardno & Collett, 2004; Lashway, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2004). Direct leadership is where the principal's actions directly influence student outcomes, and is more likely to be evident in small schools where the principal is usually in greater daily contact with teachers and students. Indirect influence on the other hand, is where the principal's actions can affect outcomes through others. Indirect influence shifts the notion of leadership as being encompassed in one person to the notion of shared or distributed leadership where organisations have multiple leaders (Southworth, 2011; Weber, 1996).

To clarify the nature and components of effective educational leadership, researchers use different terms to describe effective leadership practices or behaviours that have positive effects on student achievement or outcomes. Weber (1996) employs a leadership model with *functions* of leadership which he identifies as: defining the school mission; managing curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning climate; assessing and improving instruction; and assessing the instructional programme. Lashway (2006) uses the term *acts* to describe effective leadership practices and lists these as: setting direction; developing people; leading change; and establishing managerial order. Robinson et al., (2009) use the term *dimensions* to describe the effective educational leadership practices from direct evidence of: establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; ensuring an orderly and supportive environment; creating educationally powerful connections; and engaging in constructive problem talk. What these models or lists have in common is that the leadership practices are fluid and interdependent on each other - that is no single leadership act, function or dimension can stand alone. For example, professional learning cannot be supported without creating a positive learning climate or hiring the right staff. The core behaviours or practices of effective educational leaders are, in summary: setting direction or goals; developing people; improving teaching and learning; and establishing an orderly and supportive climate (Lashway, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Weber, 1996).

Another core condition for educational leadership effectiveness identified by (Cardno, 2012) is relationship-building. In the document *Kiwi leadership for principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008) it is claimed that improved learning for all students is likely when the principal's leadership is underpinned by "functional and interpersonal relationships" (p.14). Effective educational leadership is about getting the relationships right and tackling difficult work challenges simultaneously, so that relationships are strengthened through doing the hard collective work of improving teaching and learning (Robinson, 2011). The literature suggests effective leaders build relationships by promoting

professional dialogue and encouraging problem-solving talk (Blase' & Blase', 2000; Cardno, 2012; Leithwood, 2011; Robinson et al., 2009). Solving problems effectively means educational leaders can influence the organisational conditions that affect learning outcomes for students (Cardno, 2012). Cardno (2012) contends the main work of educational leaders is with teachers. Hence, when engaging with teachers, leaders need to build productive relationships that allow critical problems to be addressed. Productive relationships are built on respect. Robinson (2011) argues that without respect, leaders will not be able to build the relational trust needed to get good feedback about their thinking.

Relationship building involves educational leaders using both leadership and management skills. Educational leadership encompasses both management and leadership because "leadership is needed to drive and management to enact" (Starratt, 2003, p. 24). Robinson (2011) states that whilst the leadership dimensions tell leaders *what* to focus on to make a better impact on student achievement, they do not say how. To do the *how*, Robinson outlines what she terms as 'capabilities' that have to be applied to one's leadership practice. These are applying relevant knowledge, solving complex problems and building relational trust. Blasé and Blasé (2000) suggest effective instructional leadership is embedded in school culture where it is expected and routinely delivered. Similarly, Southworth (2011) argues that highly effective school leaders know that whatever they want to see happening is contingent on others putting ideas into practice. He claims effective school leaders work directly on their indirect influence through the strategies and processes of modeling, monitoring and dialogue. There is no single correct style of leadership for learning that is suitable in all school contexts (Leithwood, 2011). Leithwood (2011) recommends that leaders shape their strategies and styles to meet the needs of their particular school taking into consideration internal school conditions (for instance the culture of the school) and context conditions (environmental and organisational conditions such as school level, school size, student composition). This theory can be applied to Pasifika students - they are culturally diverse so 'one size' does not fit all (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Educational leadership and achievement

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report entitled *Improving school leadership: Policy and Practice 2008* (Pont, Nusche, & Hunter, 2008), recommends that policy makers and practitioners need to ensure that the roles and responsibilities related to improved learning outcomes are at the core of school leadership practice. One of the leadership responsibilities identified earlier that contributes positively to improving learning outcomes for students is goal setting (Lashway, 2006; Leithwood, 2011; Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2011). However goals do not motivate unless they are seen to be important and linked to educational purposes (Weber, 1996). To do this, leaders need to make sure goals are clear and unambiguous (Barnett, McCormick, & Conners, 2001). If goals are not specific teachers are likely to respond negatively. For instance, Barnett et al., (2001) in their study involving Sydney secondary schools, found that the more fervently principals espoused abstract vision statements, the more negatively their teachers reacted. Teachers' negative reactions to vision statements can be attributed to perceived discrepancy between the principal's 'talk' and 'walk' (Robinson et al., 2009).

Leaders also have to be aware of teacher expectations and ensure they align with school goals. Alton-Lee (2003) cautions that inappropriate teacher expectations can create a barrier to effective practice and undermine student achievement. Ethnicity and gender are two of the factors Alton-Lee (2003) identifies as playing a role in teacher expectations that are unrelated to students' actual capability. High expectations are necessary for improving student achievement, but can be counterproductive when not supported by quality teaching (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Quality teaching is dependent on leaders being knowledgeable about current practice and being directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instructions and assessment practices (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) points out that while "there is no formula that will guarantee learning for every student in

every context” (p.34) there is well-documented evidence about teaching approaches that consistently have a positive impact on student learning. Teaching approaches that enable students to take charge of their own learning in a highly structured supportive environment that fosters sustained and thoughtful student engagement makes sustained higher achievement possible (Alton-Lee, 2003). Leaders also have to create opportunities for staff to plan collaboratively and evaluate teaching and learning (Robinson et al., 2009).

Another key feature that has been identified as improving student outcomes is the allocation of funds for resourcing. When allocating funding, leaders have to ensure that different types of staff are employed to reach all students (Weber, 1996) and also consider resourcing and funding for developing people (Lashway, 2006). Effective leaders provide teachers with the professional development needed for the successful execution of their jobs (Waters et al., 2004). The *Kiwi leadership for principals* document argues that the principal’s core role is to lead both the learning and the organisation, in order to enhance educational outcomes for all young people (Ministry of Education, 2008). Knowledgeable teachers, given the right professional development that aligns to their needs and their students’ needs, can facilitate sustained higher achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003).

As has already been alluded to, leaders’ impact on student achievement comes from creating and sustaining the conditions that enable and encourage teachers and students to do their best work (Lashway, 2006; Seashore, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). The conditions identified are: building relationships and connections (Lashway, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Seashore et al., 2010); resolving conflicts quickly (Cardno, 2012; Weber, 1996); protecting teaching time (Waters et al., 2004; Weber, 1996); and ensuring consistency in social expectations and discipline codes (Robinson et al., 2009). The learning climate involves teachers, students and their families. However, in order to participate at school children have to attend school. Participating in education is fundamental to student achievement (Ryan & Loader, 2011): “Every day a student is not at school is a day they are not learning. Over time, patterns of non-attendance can place students at risk of poor achievement...” (Ryan & Loader,

2011, p. 4).

Another factor identified as improving student achievement is collaboration between school and home. The literature claims that partnerships that align school and home practices and allows parents to actively support their children shows some of the strongest impact on student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003; Tuioti, 2002). However, whilst the literature states parental or caregiver involvement in their children's education is crucial to improved learning outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003) it does not really say how this can be achieved. There is also little mention in the literature about how schools wish to collaborate with parents and even less on how parents would like to collaborate with schools. Cardno's (2012) *Categories of collaboration model* offers some solutions on how school leaders collaborate with teachers. This model may also be used, I suggest, for school leaders to decide how to collaborate with Pasifika students' families. Cardno (2012) argues leaders have to decide the type or degree of collaboration that is appropriate in a particular situation as the wrong type of collaboration can lead to frustration. Cardno's (2012) *Categories of collaboration model* illustrates the types of collaboration decisions leaders face when deciding how to collaborate. These are:

1. Information –letting people know what is happening and accepting feedback
2. Consultation-seeking response or advice formally or informally from individuals and groups
3. Discussion-presenting information and organizing forms to facilitate debates to increase understanding and encourage questioning
4. Involvement-inviting people as subscribers to participate in the review processes
5. Participation-taking part in policy and programme implementation as contributors and active participants (p.134).

Educational leadership and diversity

Diversity in education refers to the range of differences found in people (students and staff) working in the field of education. It generally refers to the visible differences in people such as gender, ethnicity, age, physical abilities (Coleman, 2011) rather than the non-visible differences (religion, sexuality or class) which may be less obvious. In education, interest in diversity has usually been in relation to the characteristics of diverse learners and their cultural or socio-economic 'deficits' rather than diverse leaders (Lumby & Morrison, 2010). The term 'diversity' seldom stands on its own. For instance, Lumby and Morrison (2010) point out diversity has become a ubiquitous term in education often paired with another concept, that of inclusion. The notion of 'inclusion' implies that there is a dominant group and that there are outlying groups that may not be part of this group. Gunter (2006) asserts that diversity is a normal feature of humanity; however, whether it is seen as positive or negative is dependent on political, economic and social structures. Coleman (2011) agrees, arguing diversity is not just about difference but also the ways these differences are perceived and valued.

Researchers suggest that rather than seeking solutions from the private sector, the field of educational leadership should lead the way in handling diversity issues (Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2006). Leaders have been identified as playing a key role in reducing disparities for indigenous and other minoritised peoples (Bishop, 2011; Coleman, 2011). Blackmore (2006) argues that educational leaders need to put issues of diversity on the agenda, and that educators need to understand diversity in order to make education more equitable for all, which means it is about political will by government locally and nationally.

A positive change resulting from the discourse on diversity is the greater understanding of the importance of leadership for the achievement goal of success for all students (Robinson, 2011). Before change can happen in regards to Pasifika achievement there needs to be cultural leadership. Whilst cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, Schein (2010) contends it is essential for

leaders if they are to lead. Schein (2010) outlines three levels of organisational culture. The first is *artefacts*-all the phenomena you can see, hear, and feel. The second level is *espoused beliefs and values*-ideals, goals, values, aspirations, and plans. The third level is *basic underlying assumptions*-unconscious, taken for granted beliefs and values, which determine behaviour, perception, thought and feeling. Waitere (2008), when discussing 'cultural' leadership, claims all educational leaders need to be explicit about the values and beliefs that underpin their leadership practice and actions. Leaders are responsible for setting the culture and modeling behavior; if valuing the diversity of individual students and staff is a part of the school ethos this should feed through to every aspect of their leadership (Coleman, 2011). "The *behaviours* of school leaders have a greater impact on pupil performance than school *structures* or leadership models" (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2007, p.1; cited in Coleman, 2011). Basic assumptions tend to be non-confrontable and non-debatable and therefore difficult to change (Schein, 2010). This echoes the views of Pasifika scholars. Pasikale (2002) maintains ineffectiveness in reversing the "failure" trend of Pasifika achievement is the inability to recognise and reconcile the tensions between state aspirations and individual aspirations and that strategies need to be developed which recognize both state and individual responsibility of the problems and solutions. Furthermore most educational reforms have been founded on the need to better align the performance of the education system with the economy (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002).

In the New Zealand context, this means "New Zealand teachers need a 'we' that is inclusive of those of us who are Māori, Pakeha, Tokelauan, Tongan, Japanese, Dutch, Cantonese, Somali, or have multiple ethnic heritages" (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 26). However, Siteine (2013) argues ethnic self-identification is taken for granted by individuals in the mainstream but that this is not the case for ethnic minorities. She cautions that careful attention has to be paid to the recognition of identity as "the idea of singular identities does not allow for the idea that individuals have multiple, fluid identities" (p.69). Therefore Siteine argues affirming identity is an on-going process with the individual student rather than the teacher making the identity choice.

The literature confirms the relevance of the theme *educational leadership* in relation to both research questions:

1. What are Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership?
2. What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers' perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Educational leadership relates directly to question one as Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership will be examined. The literature also confirms that educational leadership influences Pasifika student achievement so this theme is also relevant to research question two.

Pasifika Achievement

Defining Pasifika education

I have previously noted that the main issue for New Zealand and Pasifika education is the continuing inadequate academic achievement rates for Pasifika students (Tuioti, 2002). Pasifika educators, in a colloquium on Pacific education held at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji in 2001, concluded that while educational priorities focused on "improving the overall quality of education, access to schooling and equity of outcomes, the over-riding issues of what education is, what its purposes are and what the Pacific visions are for Pacific peoples and communities received little or no attention... there has been little questioning of the values and assumptions underpinning formal education or development" (Institute of Education, 2002, p. 1). These educators identified the primary goal of Pacific education as being to "reconceptualise education in a way that will allow Pacific people to reclaim the education process" (p.2) which, at the same time, will allow for the articulation of a Pacific vision for education. Pasifika educators at the colloquium decided to use "The Tree of Opportunity" as the metaphor for re-thinking Pacific education. They identified the primary goal of Pacific education as ensuring that all Pacific students are successful and to become fully participating members of their groups, societies and the global community (Institute of Education, 2002). Education, or the Tree of

Opportunity, they argued has at its roots the cultures of Pacific societies. They argued that “sustainable, self-help and self-managed education in the Pacific imply control and direction by Pacific people so that they own the process” (Institute of Education, 2002, p. 3). One of the most critical endpoints of Pasifika education is the social and economic advancement of Pasifika peoples and an increased range of choices for them to participate fully in wider New Zealand society (Airini et al., 2010).

Pasifika scholars working in the field today acknowledge the conceptualisation made by Pasifika educators at the 2002 colloquium and argue it “is essential for informing education policy and practice for Pasifika peoples in New Zealand because it is informed by Pacific aspirations, and perspectives” (Wendt-Samu et al., 2013, p. 140). Building on this Wendt Samu et al., (2013) offer their conceptualisation of Pasifika education for the twenty-first century:

- Its purpose is to support our survival and sustainability as Pasifika peoples, and enhance our transformative capability.
- The main goal is the success of our learners within this education system-learners equipped to both serve their families and contribute to New Zealand society.
- It is a process grounded in our diverse Pasifika cultures. We believe this empowers us to respond purposefully to external influences.
- This process involves a critique of the values and assumptions underlying education policies and initiative.

This concept of Pacific education ensures that Pacific cultural identities and values remain uncompromised (p.141).

As shown previously, the lack of educational success for Pasifika learners is something that successive governments have tried to address (Pasikale, 2002). This still holds true over ten years later. The *Pasifika Education Plan* (PEP) documents (Ministry of Education, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2009) is where the government sets out the goals for the education achievement of Pasifika learners (Ministry of Education, 2012a). The *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* is the sixth such document. The first five-year plan, *Pasifika Education Plan*

2001-2006, was released by the Labour Government in 2000 and was successful in achieving its participation targets. However, achievement levels remained a concern (Wendt-Samu et al., 2013). A feature in the *Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* was the incorporation of the National Standards (Ministry of Education, 2010) in literacy and numeracy (Wendt-Samu et al., 2013). The development of the *Pasifika Education Plan* and the ongoing reviews of it have provided a framework for the resourcing of initiatives to facilitate “enhanced Pasifika learner outcomes” (Ferguson et al., 2008, p. 1). As the PEP is not mandatory in schools Wendt-Samu et al., (2013) maintain that the monitoring of Pasifika student achievement is at schools’ discretion. They argue that ERO’s reviews of Pasifika student achievement (biennial reports which began in 2002) in schools “has more influence on schools’ stewardship of Pasifika student achievement than the PEP” (Wendt-Samu et al., 2013, p. 147).

Policies that require schools and educational institutions to give an account of how the needs of Pasifika students are being addressed, and the outcomes of these strategies, would help to ensure that Pasifika education is part of schools’ core business (Tuioti, 2002). Although Pasifika achievement is a government priority, currently Pasifika learners are not explicitly referred to in the National Education Goals ((Wendt-Samu et al., 2013). However, Wendt-Samu et al., (2003) argue NAG (National Administration Guideline) One holds ‘interpretive potential’ (p.146) as it requires the Board of Trustees (BOT) to “identify students and groups of students of who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving and who have special needs” (Ministry of Education, 2013b). Pasifika learners are explicitly referred to in NAG Two A in reporting the achievement of National Standards (Ministry of Education, 2010) to the Secretary of Education “on the numbers and proportions of students achieving at, above, below or well below National Standards, including by Māori, Pasifika, European/Pākehā, Asian, gender, and by year level” (Ministry of Education, 2013b). In the wider context of Pasifika education there are disparate pieces of information and research that need to be synthesised to provide transparent comprehensible documentation that will give a clearer picture of Pasifika learners’ progress and achievement (Ferguson et al., 2008).

Although improving educational outcomes for Pasifika students in New Zealand schools has been the focus for Pasifika education, what cannot be ignored is that educational outcomes are greatly influenced by socio-economic factors (Tuioti, 2002). Graeme Aitken (the University of Auckland's dean of education), in a New Zealand Herald article, also supports this notion stating the biggest obstacle to student achievement remains societal inequality (Jones, 2014b, p. A4). Pasifika families are more likely than other groups to have low socio-economic standards of living (Tuioti, 2002). Ultimately what educational leaders have to be mindful of is that what works to improve the achievement of advantaged students is what works for disadvantaged or 'at-risk' students (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 6).

Pasifika student achievement

I have already acknowledged Pasifika success has been identified as critical for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2009). Closing the achievement gap between Pasifika and other students is one of the current Minister of Education's goals and is a key focus for the Ministry of Education (Amituanai-Tolosa, McNaughton, Kuin-Lai, & Airini, 2009). The Ministry of Education, researchers, educators and the Pasifika communities in New Zealand have all expressed concern with the educational achievement of their students (Robinson & Timperley, 2004). However, it is implied that students need to change. Seldom is there discussion of how organisations need to change (Horrocks, Ballantyne, Silao, Maueli, & Fairbrother, 2012). National achievement results in international tests and in the National Monitoring outcomes indicate the New Zealand schooling system has been performing, on average, less well for Māori and Pasifika students (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Despite efforts to target more funding through specially developed projects by the Ministry of Education, the trends for Pasifika peoples in education continue in much the same way with little effective positive change (Tuioti, 2002). This still holds true in 2014. Schooling improvement programmes generally show evidence of varying degrees of effectiveness (Amituanai-Tolosa et al., 2009). Additionally, the high disparities and growing demographic profile of Pasifika

learners suggest a need for redirection in terms of meeting the needs of the Pasifika group of learners (Ferguson et al., 2008). Robinson (2011) suggests leaders have an ethical obligation to make decisions based on high-quality information. However, the Education Review Office, in its 2012 report on improving education outcomes for Pasifika learners, found that while some schools have been pro-active in attempts to improve outcomes for Pasifika students, the wider education community has not done enough to accelerate the progress of individual Pacific learners who are not achieving well (Education Review Office, 2012).

ERO's report entitled *How schools engage with Pasifika learners and act to improve Pasifika students' educational outcomes* (2012) found that generally effective teaching practices have been adapted to be responsive to Pasifika students and that students are clear on what instruction works for them and parents want to know how they can support their children. Unfortunately, the remainder of the findings were consistent with the findings of the 2009 and 2010 reports. There is little evidence that schools respond to the diversity, identity, language and cultures of Pasifika learners. Large proportions of schools are still not fully examining the achievement of Pacific students, using Pacific contexts in the classroom, responding to the individual needs of Pacific learners, or involving Pacific parents. These differences in experiences and knowledge at school entry can become disadvantages if they are not adequately addressed by the education system (Tunmer et al., 2006). Tunmer et al., (2006) argue, the answer is greater emphasis on differentiated instruction. The 2012 ERO report also confirms the grim Pasifika achievement results for the last two decades - minimal change in the last twenty years.

Currently one in six Pasifika students will not have achieved basic and literacy and numeracy skills by the age of ten (Ministry of Education, 2013a). Pasifika students usually feature prominently in cohorts who underachieve (Alton-Lee, 2003; Gilmore & Smith, 2011) and are over-represented in the tail end of the achievement distributions (Robinson, McNaughton, & Timperley, 2011). For example, in the National Education Monitoring Project 2010, Pakeha and

students of other ethnicities performed better than Pasifika (and Maori) students in each area of the curriculum (Gilmore & Smith, 2011). Similarly, in 2012, Pasifika students scored below equivalent cohorts of other ethnicities in the National Standards (Ministry of Education, 2010) for Reading, Writing and Maths (Ministry of Education, 2014). In 2012 59.7 % of Pasifika students achieved National Standards (NS) in Maths (compared to 73.6% of all others), 62.6% achieved NS in Reading (compared to 77.4% of all others) and 56.8% achieved NS in Writing (compared to 70% of all others) (Ministry of Education, 2014). While collecting Pasifika data is a useful 'first step' in gathering data for a 'theoretical' Pasifika cohort, schools must also promote the learning of individual Pasifika students based on data they have collected and analysed about their cultural assets, interests, achievement and next steps for learning (Education Review Office, 2012).

Although the literature suggests that partnerships which align school and home practices show some of the strongest impact on student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003), the issue of teacher expectations of Pasifika students, and differences between school and home values are two areas that are difficult to isolate and effectively address (Tuioti, 2002). The ERO report (2012) also found that greater effectiveness is associated with a range of home-school connections and that coherence with a school at all levels is important to effectiveness. The complexity of matching or aligning home and school values is also highlighted by Robinson and Timperley (2004) who argue that while there may be agreement to change teaching processes to reduce the mismatch between Pasifika children's cultural capital and the expectations of the school, it is necessary to look carefully at what this may entail as classrooms include many other cultures whose cultural capital and learning styles also need acknowledgement (Robinson & Timperley, 2004). The implication seems to be that the reduction of the mismatch between Pasifika cultural and school expectations may disadvantage other cultures who need acknowledgement, and that catering for all the cultures in classrooms may be difficult. However, recognition of the knowledge, competencies and behaviours children acquire in their upbringing,

and teachers' willingness to utilise these characteristics in the classroom establishes teaching and learning conditions that potentially benefit more students (Sheets, 2005). Cummins (2000) suggests when teachers express respect for the language and cultural knowledge that students bring to the classroom and focus their teaching on helping students generate new knowledge then student identity and academic achievement is affirmed. Similarly the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013 to 2017*, aims to achieve 'optimum' learning for Pasifika learners by promoting closer alignment and 'compatibility' between home and school.

The literature has identified a variety of changes that are needed to raise Pasifika student achievement. Tuioti (2002) recommends pre-service training to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to address the learning needs of Pasifika students along with policies that require schools to be accountable for meeting set targets to raise Pasifika student achievement. In the foreword to the *Pasifika Education Plan 2013 to 2017* (Ministry of Education, 2012) recommended strategies to improve Pasifika students learning outcomes are identified. These include "enhanced school experiences" and a "sharper focus on provider performance" (p.1). In the foreword to *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why - Best evidence synthesis iteration* (2009) Pasifika principals argue that the development of Pasifika leadership in New Zealand education be considered a government policy priority to lift academic success for Pasifika students (Auva'a, Esera, Pamaka, Davies and Tiatia; in Robinson et al., 2009). Robinson, et al., (2011) argues effective and equitable system-wide educational interventions are needed - "effective" is defined as when Pasifika students and Maori students match national expectations. Robinson, et al., (2011) identify six conditions associated with successful system reforms in countries that have improved to the level to which they aspire. These are: professional system-wide commitment to educational improvement with education spending given high priority; universal application of core standards; the professionalisation of teaching and leadership; professional forms of accountability; and institutionalising the improvement of practice. Alton-Lee (2003) suggests New Zealand educators break the pattern of low expectations

for Pasifika and Maori students. To do this the literature suggests educators do something different to change the Pasifika achievement trend (Ferguson et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2013b; Tuafuti, 2013, Tunmer et al., 2006). Changing educational leadership practices (and consequently teacher practice) may be a way to change the pattern of low expectations for Pasifika and Maori students. However, changes in education do not unfold spontaneously, they have to be led (Scott, 1999).

Commitment to change or educational reforms requires creating conditions and processes that enhances the chances of getting people on board (Fullan, 2003). Change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement and difficult to sustain (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Fullan (2003) suggests sustainability in organisations requires leaders at many levels and building the capability and passion of all members of the organisation. This means beginning with the idea of a moral purpose and creating communities of interaction around the ideas proposed. It also means ensuring quality information is part of the interaction and deliberations (Fullan, 2003). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fink (2012) suggest sustainability is inherently moral and requires leadership in a range of areas. The foremost principle in sustainability in educational change, they argue, is that sustainability matters. Hargreaves and Fink (2012) argue sustainability is likely to happen if certain principles are followed. These include leadership for caring, leadership for learning, distributed leadership, change that lasts from one leader to the next, leadership that is socially just and leadership that promotes cohesive diversity. Improving education outcomes for Pasifika learners needs change that is sustainable and requires leadership that will make this part of the moral purpose of schools. One of the keys to sustainable reform is leadership that is aware of the conditions necessary to support student learning, and which willingly supports the purpose of all school routines, procedures and practices to shape a school culture centred on reform (Bishop, 2011). Similarly, Brown et al., (2007) argues that changing practices is not solely about changing individuals, but about changing the conditions that support and structure the practice. Sustainable improvement depends on successful leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012).

The literature confirms the relevance of the theme *Pasifika achievement* in relation to research question 2: What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers' perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Pasifika teachers' perspectives

Pasifika teachers' perspectives

As shown previously, when exploring the link between what Pasifika people think and what is done, this is best done by Pasifika people who have demonstrated personal success in education (Pasikale, 2002). This is supported by Brown et al., (2008) who found Pasifika teachers "find strength in association with each other, and regard themselves as having distinctive experiences and distinctive talents to offer education"(Brown et al., 2008, p. 2). As Pasifika peoples make up two percent of the teacher work force, Brown et al., (2007) contend that Pasifika interests are being under-represented in schools and curriculum development. A target identified in the latest *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* is to increase the number of Pasifika teachers to 20% by 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2012). Pasifika teachers are in a unique position in primary schools as they are able to view Pasifika achievement using a Pasifika cultural lens. The literature suggests that adopting a cultural lens helps us to know more about our own systems of schooling, leadership and management (Dimmock & Walker, 2002).

Perception is the process in which individuals interpret the messages received from their senses and give meaning to their environment; cultural differences and socialisation into particular groups means we learn how to perceive things in a particular way (Thomas, 2002). Although there is not much in the literature about Pasifika teachers' perceptions of educational leadership in relation to student achievement in primary schools, there have been a small number of studies about Pasifika teachers' perceptions in other aspects of education. Cardno and Auva'a (2010) investigated Pasifika teachers' perceptions relating to leadership and found participants in their study experienced the feeling of

institutional racism from seniors in the system (especially the white majority) who were not always perceived as being supportive. Pasifika teachers in the study conducted by Brown, Devine, Leslie, Paiti, Sila'ila'i, Umaki, and Williams (2008) outlined concerns about their teaching experiences. Pasifika teachers in the study suggested personal ownership of the educational system requires a sense of belonging and personal success. They identified that assumptions or perceptions are often barriers that have to be identified and disestablished before the doors into schools are open. Another study that revealed Pasifika teachers' perceptions was the report on *Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara (SEMO)* by Robinson and Timperley (2004). They found the majority of Pasifika participants in the study believed Pasifika students achieve better if taught by Pasifika teachers as opposed to Management and the Ministry of Education personnel who had no respondents share the same belief. An example of how perception influence assumptions is illustrated by Tuafuti (2013) who argues Pasifika children in New Zealand who are 'underachieving' should not be called or viewed as 'underachievers'. Instead these learners should be labelled 'under-prepared' (p.95).

Aspirations for Pasifika student success

For the vast majority of Pasifika peoples, the needs and aspirations are the same as when they first emigrated to New Zealand in the 1950s-that their children become educated and successful (Anae, 2001). These aspirations have not changed in the twenty-first century. The main goals for Pasifika education remain the success of Pasifika learners within the New Zealand education system, and that learners are equipped to both serve their families and contribute to New Zealand society (Wendt-Samu et al., 2013). Previous research evidence shows Pasifika learners to be generally highly motivated to succeed and to be willing to learn across primary and secondary schools (Amituanai-Tolua et al., 2009). So why are these aspirations not being met?

The starting point to understanding why students choose to engage academically or withdraw from learning is to acknowledge, "human relationships are at the

heart of schooling" (Cummins, 2000). Cummins (2000) argues intuitively that everyone knows this from their own schooling experiences - people are likely to put in much more effort for teachers who believe and care about them than for teachers who do not consider them capable. He argues empowerment comes from the process of negotiating identities in the classroom. Pasifika scholars concur. Siteine (2013) asserts "the sensitivity and understanding that teachers need to show to their students is more critical in the affirmation of identity than the factual information or celebratory experiences they may engage in within their classroom programmes that focus on different ethnic and cultural groups" (p.69). Tuioti (2002) maintains teachers under-estimate the influence their day-to-day interactions with Pasifika students have on their achievement. Finally, Amituanai-Toala et al., (2009) argues teachers need to provide a strongly supportive base that enables students to take risks and be critical and engaged.

Successive Ministry of Education documents have identified 'reciprocal relationships' as one of the key principles to Pasifika success. As Pasifika achievement rates have not shown significant improvement over last twenty years, this suggests that perhaps 'reciprocal relationships' may not be working as well as envisioned. The Ministry of Education's document on effective governance (Ministry of Education, 2013a) suggests reciprocal relationships with Pasifika communities can be built through effective community engagement, having Pasifika representation on the Board of Trustees, encouraging school engagement with Pasifika families and appropriate engagement with Pasifika communities. This document, perhaps unwittingly, places school Board of Trustees in a position of power. Who defines what 'appropriate engagement' is? Cummins (2000) argues *coercive relations of power* is when a dominant individual or group, to the detriment of a subordinated individual or group, exercises power. He argues this is what happens in schools with the 'mainstream' 'subordinating' groups that are not mainstream. He offers an alternative to this model, *collaborative relations of power*. In this model 'power' is not a fixed quantity but generated through interactions with others. Cummins argues that within this context empowerment can be described as the collaborative creation of power. He defines 'empowerment' as the collaborative

creation of power. He argues that the more empowered an individual or group becomes the more power there is generated for others to share. Cummins (2000) also claims students whose schooling experiences reflect collaborative relations of power, participate confidently because their identity is being affirmed and extended in their interactions with educators. Cummins' *collaborative relations of power*, matches the Pasifika principle of reciprocity. Reciprocity is one of the key principles and values of Fa'asamoa (the Samoan way of doing things). Reciprocal relationships is "encompassing the art of sharing" (Sauni, 2011; p.110) regardless of status. As has already been established *Teu le va* in Samoan literally means taking care of the relationship. *Teu le va* (the Ministry of Education document), emphasises working together and sharing power- affirming the importance of relationships. Tuafuti (2013) argues the long history of Pasifika student achievement in New Zealand is disempowering for Pasifika educators, parents and communities. Leadership is not only a call to action but also a call to relationship (Waitere, 2008).

A school that demonstrated reciprocity between school leaders, students and their families was Taita College in Lower Hutt. Pasifika parents lobbied for change at the school after a poor ERO report in 2010 which highlighted that only 35% of students at the school passed NCEA level 1. This event coincided with a new principal, John Murdoch, beginning at the school who identified there was a need to improve the relationship between the school and Pasifika parents and students. I have previously noted that professional dialogues and discussions are important when they lead to actions which transforms teaching and learning practices and ultimately lead to improved student achievement (Cardno, 2012; Southworth, 2004). This is what happened at this school. Together the principal and the parents used the iceberg model in which they placed Pasifika achievement at the top of the iceberg, below the waterline were factors they considered would improve achievement. They focused on learning not just behaviour, created and maintained a positive learning environment, and built effective relationships with stakeholders (Pasifika-Unit, 2013). By 2012 the NCEA results showed overall student achievement numbers at 79% for Level 1, 66% for Level 2 and 87% for Level 3. The school had the biggest Pasifika cohort

go to University from the Hutt Valley. Taita College demonstrated major characteristics of good practice – they created effective links between school and the community where practices and policies were inclusive of all languages and cultures (Alton-Lee, 2003). Taita College also illustrated Cardno’s (2012) tenet, that relationship building is a core condition for educational leadership effectiveness. Tuafuti (2013) argues that through collaboration the most difficult challenges can be overcome; this is what Taita College showed and what is needed for Pasifika student success.

The literature confirms the relevance of the theme *Pasifika teachers’ perspectives* in relation to the two research questions because the research requires Pasifika teachers’ perceptions about educational leadership and Pasifika student achievement to be explored.

Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature on the themes of educational leadership, Pasifika achievement, and Pasifika teachers’ perspectives that are fundamental to the aims and questions of this research study. The literature review has sparked the development of the research questions below:

1. What are Pasifika teachers’ expectations and experiences of educational leadership?
2. What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers’ perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

The next chapter outlines the research methodology which guided this research and explains and justifies why a qualitative approach to the methodology, data collection and analysis were selected.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the research methodology and explains why an interpretive epistemological position and consequently a qualitative approach to the methodology, data collection and analysis were selected. Discussion on research design, the research method of semi-structured interviews, data analysis and validity and reliability will follow. This chapter concludes with a section on ethical considerations.

Research Methodology

Rationale

Epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowledge to do with how we know what we know (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). How you align yourself epistemologically affects how you will go about uncovering social behaviour (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). If you view knowledge as hard, objective and scientific then you will take a positivist approach; if you view knowledge as personal, subjective and unique then you subscribe to the interpretive approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Pasifika epistemology is widely accepted as being interpretive (Airini et al., 2010; Anae et al., 2001). Ontologically I subscribe to constructivism. I view the social world as “something that people are in the process of fashioning” (Bryman, 2012, p. 19) rather than “relatively inert and beyond our influence” (Bryman, 2012, p. 6). The interpretive approach stresses how people make meaning in their social worlds (Cohen et al., 2007). I am Samoan, the research participants are Pasifika; it follows then that I have chosen to use an interpretive approach in this study.

Qualitative approach

According to Cresswell (2002) the choice of whether to use a qualitative or quantitative approach is based on the research problem, personal

experiences and the audience for which the research is intended. If a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it then a qualitative approach works well as it is exploratory and uses open-ended questions (Cresswell, 2002). The literature review suggests that my research topic has been little researched. The research problem is focused on the personal experiences of Pasifika teachers; therefore a qualitative approach was adopted.

A criticism of the interpretive or qualitative approach is that it has “narrow micro-sociological perspectives” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 26). However, in this research study Pasifika teachers’ perspectives were being sought; therefore, a quantitative or positivist approach with the view that knowledge is “hard, objective and tangible” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 25) was not the best fit for the purposes of this research. The interpretive approach where the researcher begins with individuals and sets out to understand their interpretations of the world around them (Cohen et al., 2007) aligned with the aims of the research study.

Sampling

As the research study is about the experiences and perspectives of Pasifika primary school teachers I employed purposive sampling. The goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions being posed (Bryman, 2012). Participants had to identify as being Pasifika through ancestry or heritage (Ferguson et al., 2008) and work in the primary school sector (Year 1-8) because this is the school sector I was most interested in researching.

Hinds (2000) notes for every hour spent interviewing to allow ten times as much time to process the data. Realistically then (and taking into consideration the likelihood of non-responses) a sample size of eight to ten participants was my goal for this, as this number would produce a sufficiently rich pool of data. This goal was achieved and eight participants were interviewed. ,

Research Design

The aims of this research were to investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools; and to identify specific leadership practices that are perceived by Pasifika teachers as influencing Pasifika student achievement. As Cohen et al., (2007) state "Research design is governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose'" (p.78). By subscribing to the constructivist approach the goal of the researcher, according to Cresswell (2002), is to "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (p.8). Questions used when adopting a constructivist approach have to be broad, general and open ended allowing the researcher to identify themes from the data emerging (Cresswell, 2002). This approach to questioning was used in this research study. Using semi-structured interviews was the best fit for the purpose of this research for, as Bryman (2012) explains, semi-structured interviews are used so that the concepts and theories emerge out of the data.

Research Methods

Although both the *semi-structured interview* and *unstructured interview* processes are flexible with the emphasis on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events (Bryman, 2012); I chose to use the *semi-structured interview* because my research had a clear focus and so I could address specific issues.

Using semi-structured interviews allowed me to design an interview guide (see Appendix A) with topics that clearly related to research questions, whilst still having the freedom to add questions as needed and allowing the participants plenty of freedom in their responses. In the preparation of the interview guide I adhered to Bryman's (2012) suggestions for conducting successful interviews. I ordered the topic areas so that questions flowed well whilst allowing for flexibility during the actual interview. My interview questions were designed to help answer the research questions. I had to be careful not to make the questions too specific, to use language that the participants understood, and to

avoid asking leading questions. Piloting the interview guide with colleagues from my own school and family members in the teaching profession assisted me in modifying and improving the interview guide.

When planning for the interviews I took into account practical procedures suggested by Bryman (2012), Fontana and Frey (2005) and Hinds (2000). The first of these was the consent form that participants signed before being interviewed (see Appendix B) that formalised their willingness to participate, and acknowledged they had a clear understanding of the research aims and process. The consent form also outlined to the participants their right to withdraw from the study at any time until ten days after their interviews were transcribed. Because Pasifika people are a multi-ethnic, heterogenous group comprising of different languages and cultures (Ferguson et al., 2008), the consent form had a *specific information section* with space to record ethnicity, place of birth, parents' place of birth and number of years in New Zealand. This is because Pacific statistical data and research needs to be divided into ethnic and intra-ethnic specifications distinguishing whether Pasifika peoples are born and raised in New Zealand or overseas (Anae, 2001).

Another practical consideration when conducting interviews was the context of the interviews. Fontana and Frey (2005) hold that each interview context is one of interaction and relation therefore the result is not just the account and reply to the interview but also the social dynamic of the interview. Before participants signed the consent form they were informed verbally and through the information sheet (see Appendix C) about what the research study was about and what their participation entailed. Hinds (2000) also notes an encounter between two people involves conscious and unconscious elements so I began each interview by thanking participants for assisting with the study to establish a relaxed attitude. I also followed Pasifika protocol and offered refreshments before and after conducting the interviews.

Where the interviews would be conducted was another practical consideration. Hinds (2000), advises the interview setting should have minimum outside or

distracting noise, whilst Bryman (2012) notes the interview should be in a place that is quiet and private so the interviewee does not have to worry about being overheard. As my research was not institution specific, participants were given the options of when and where they wished to be interviewed and they selected the venues. The interviews took place in my home, in participants' offices, in a staffroom and in a participant's classroom after school. For the interview in the participant's classroom the participant introduced me to the school principal and explained why I was in the school.

A further consideration when using interviews was recording the responses made by interviewees as accurately as possible (Hinds, 2000). Bryman (2012) suggests the use of a good quality recording machines and microphone is important for qualitative researchers as they nearly always record and then transcribe their interviews. I used pilot interviews to trial the use of both the interview guide and the digital recording device. Whilst recording the interviews I was also taking notes of the main points simultaneously. Notes can serve as a reminder for the researcher to ask for clarification if needed, to check whether the interviewee wants to add information, and to use as a summary. Interviews were transcribed soon after they were conducted (Hinds, 2000). The advantages of transcribing interviews are: it corrects the natural limitations of our memories; it allows thorough examination of what people say; allows for repeated examinations of the interviewees' answers; it allows for secondary analysis and therefore helps to counter accusations of bias (Heritage, 1984, p.238; in Bryman 2012, p. 482).

The word 'inter-view' is " a view *between* people, mutually, not the interviewer extracting data, one-way from the interview" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 151). Whilst the interview aligns with the Pasifika value of reciprocity this is also one of the drawbacks identified in using interviews - the possibility of bias (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Fontana & Frey, 2005). Bias can be caused by the interviewer having preconceived notions and the participants misconstruing what was asked and what has been said by the interviewer and the participants (Cohen et al., 2007). To minimise bias I was clear in the purpose of the research and

communicated this verbally and through the use of the interview guide. If participants needed clarification on a question or if I could not understand their response, this became an opportunity to delve deeper into their answer and to develop shared understandings. I also followed what Limeric et al. (1996; cited in Cohen et al., 2007) suggest, to treat the interview as a gift. This meant I respected the information in the spirit it was given.

Another disadvantage of using interviews identified by Bryman (2012) is that qualitative data from interviews take the form of a large body of unstructured material and hence are not straightforward to analyse. This was minimised by being systematic in my data analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis involves a “kind of transformative process in which the raw data are turned into “findings” or “results” ” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 195). Because of the inductive nature of qualitative analysis, the accumulated data requires the researcher to immerse her or himself in the data (Lofland et al., 2006).

Analysis of data was done systematically using coding and memoing. Initial coding was general and open-ended and based on the themes derived from the literature. Focused coding was employed soon after to regroup the initial codes to fall under concept headings that had emerged. Focused coding builds on initial coding by expanding analytically on initial codes and bringing together larger chunks of data (Lofland et al., 2006). There was constant monitoring to ensure data from the interviews answered the research questions. To do this I used memos. Memoing is the process of writing out notes about coding categories and how they connect (Lofland et al., 2006). Memoing was used throughout the interviewing process to: elaborate and clarify the codes, to reduce ambiguity, and to theorise. I began the analysis early in the study and transcribed the semi-structured interviews soon after they were conducted.

Validity

According to Keeves (1997) the quality of the research is judged on validity. Validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument 'measures what it claims to measure' (Hinds, 2000 p.42). Kaplan (cited in Keeves, 1997) identifies three aspects of validity: it involves coherence with established knowledge; it points to a strong correspondence between the result and the real world as "represented by some mapping of the domain under investigation" (p.279); and it is linked with the ongoing usefulness of the findings in practice. These align with the Pasifika research practices identified by Arini et al., (2010) which include: collaboration in setting the research framework; creating a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to Pasifika education research and policy making; growing knowledge through a cumulative approach to research; and understanding the kinds of knowledge used in Pasifika education research and policy making.

Whilst taking into consideration internal validity (whether the methods selected answered my research question) and external validity (the extent to which my research conclusions could be transferred to other similar contexts) I also had to consider cultural validity. Morgan (2005; in Cohen et al., 2007) states that cultural validity involves an appreciation of the cultural values of those being researched. For my research topic this meant taking into account common Pasifika values. This was not problematic for me, as being Samoan, my values are Pasifika and define who I am. Cultural validity includes understanding possibly different target culture attitudes to research, choosing methods research instruments that are acceptable to the target participants, and being aware of my own cultural filters.

Cohen et al., (2007) suggests that, in interviews the best way of achieving greater validity is to minimise bias as much as possible. Causes for bias may include the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions. To ensure rigour in my research, I used pilot interviews. The pilot interviews helped to minimise bias and increase clarity as they allowed me to modify questions.

Whilst transcribing the interviews, bias was also minimised by following Hinds (2000) recommendation of recording what was said, not what I think should have been said. Triangulation was achieved through the source of the data collected - Pasifika teachers and Pasifika leaders offer different viewpoints. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that in interpretive research, triangulation will occur as participants' viewpoints will naturally produce different sets of data.

Ethical Issues

The key topic in ethics is how we should treat others (Wilkinson, 2001). Ethical considerations are necessary for any research that involves people (Bryman, 2012). The Unitec Research Ethic Committee's (UREC) main role is to protect research participants. Approval for this research study was sought and gained from the Unitec Research Ethic Committee. UREC has eight guiding ethical principles which have been followed. These are: informed and voluntary consent; respect for rights, confidentiality and preservation of anonymity; minimisation of harm; cultural and social sensitivity; limit of deception; respect for intellectual and cultural ownership; avoidance of conflict of interest and research design adequacy. More detail on how I abided by these ethical principles follows in the next section.

Informed and voluntary consent

The first main ethics principle is to ensure voluntary participation (Cardno, 2003). Informed consent is supported by the values of autonomy and well-being, as autonomy requires participants to make their own choices which in turn leads to participants' well-being (Wilkinson, 2001). Participation in this research study was informed and voluntary without duress or coercion. Before the interviews were conducted all participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix B) to formalise their willingness to participate, acknowledging they had a clear understanding of the research aims and process, and that they agreed to being interviewed. All transcripts were sent to the participants for checking to ensure the data they provided was a valid record of the information

they provided and hence trustworthy. Participants were advised of their right to withdraw their involvement at any time up until ten days after receiving their transcript. All eight participants chose to stay involved.

Respect for rights and confidentiality and preservation of anonymity

Confidentiality is about not making identities or connections public (Cardno, 2003). As part of the covering letter participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in the findings. Interview transcripts were coded to ensure the anonymity of the participants who are referred to in the transcripts as T1, T2, T3, T4 and L1, L2, L3 and L4. Anonymity was further guaranteed by ensuring that any interview excerpts that appeared in the final thesis did not reveal the identity of the participant, or the identities of people and organisations to which they may have referred. In the thesis teachers are referred to as Faiaoga (teacher) 1, 2, 3 and 4. Leaders are referred to as Pule 1, 2, 3 and 4. Some demographic information was collected but care was taken to ensure that this information was general enough in nature that the participants are not identifiable in the final thesis. For instance whilst there may be reference to participants' years of experience, the specific Pacific island that participants identify with will not be detailed. Bryman (2012) notes one aspect of confidentiality is the management of data. The collection and storage of data has been safeguarded through storing hard copies in a locked filing cabinet and by having electronic data secured via password protection. The data are only available to my supervisor and myself.

Minimisation of harm

The second ethics' principle identified by Cardno (2003) is to minimise harm and avoid deceit. In interviewing the objects of inquiry are human so Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them. Harm incorporates a number of facets: physical, emotional and any other kind (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In this research minimisation of harm required paying attention to the formulating of questions and reporting responses truthfully in the thesis in a way that does no harm whilst being true to the research aims. To help ensure minimisation of harm,

interview questions were piloted with colleagues and family. Feedback from those in the pilot interviews was used to modify interview questions.

Minimisation of harm was also safeguarded prior to the interviews by the building of rapport between myself, and the participants. A safe environment was established through the participants selecting when and where the interviews would take place. Participants were given a general overview of the interview questions. The consent form included a provision that participants could stop the interview at any time. This was also explained verbally before and during the interviews. The researcher being non-judgemental, flexible, and an active listener also averted minimisation of harm. Paying close attention to the reactions of the participants, modifying questions for clarity, or moving onto the next question, when participants appeared uncomfortable and sharing the control of the interview process further minimised harm..

Cultural and social sensitivity

As a Samoan the Pasifika values of respect, reciprocity, communalism, collective responsibility, humility, love, spirituality and service (Airini et al., 2010) are part of who I am. To ensure the interview questions were culturally appropriate for participants from other Pasifika nations I piloted the questions with colleagues from other Pacific islands. Potential cultural issues were discussed with Linda Aumua, Director of the Pacific Centre for Learning, Teaching and Research at Unitec Institute of Technology.

Limitation of deception

Deception has been avoided through the use of the information sheet formally explaining the purpose and breadth of the research (see Appendix C), the consent forms, generally following the interview guide and adhering to the principles of participant validation. Recording and transcribing the interviews also limited bias (Bryman, 2012; Hinds, 2000).

Respect for intellectual and cultural property ownership

Six practices are recommended in *Teu le va; Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education* (Airini et al., 2010) to be used in collaboration across Pasifika research and policy making. By adhering to these practices I showed respect for intellectual and cultural property ownership.

Avoidance of conflict of interest

Whilst I used family and colleagues as participants in the pilot interview I did not interview colleagues I currently work with or have worked with in the past, or members of my family.

Research design adequacy

Research design adequacy was upheld through regular consultation with my supervisors. I sought guidance when I needed it and acted on feedback.

Summary

This chapter has described the methodology and research method used in this study. The rationale for adopting an interpretive epistemological position has been justified, the selection of a qualitative approach to the methodology has been explained, and the use of semi-structured interviews for data collection and analysis has been clarified. Finally there has been discussion of the criteria I employed to ensure the validity of the data along with an explanation of the ethical issues relating to the research project. In the next chapter the findings that this research methodology and data collection method provided will be discussed.

Chapter Four: Findings and Data Analysis

Introduction

In this chapter data from the eight interviews are presented and analysed. The chapter begins with a section on the research participants, followed by a section describing how the data will be presented and then a section detailing the findings. This chapter ends with a summary of the data findings. The purpose of the interviews were to investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools; and secondly, to identify specific leadership practices perceived by Pasifika teachers as influencing Pasifika student achievement.

Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used in this research project in that all participants had to identify as being Pasifika. Participation in the research project was voluntary. Participants were given a copy of the information sheet and the consent form before the interviews began. As the research was not 'institution specific' permission from schools was not sought. Eight Pasifika teachers were interviewed. All the participants are women who trained in Auckland at either the Auckland College of Education or the University of Auckland. The participants had one or both parents born outside of New Zealand and with the exception of one interviewee, all the participants were born in New Zealand.

Structure of data presentation

The data is presented in the following way:

1. The data collection questions are stated (see Appendix B). Some of the questions have been combined and shortened to avoid repetition. These findings do not follow the order the questions were asked because the

nature of the semi-structured interview meant the interviewer had to sometimes follow the ‘path’ the participant was taking.

2. The key-sub-themes are identified from the data and presented in a table. The responses from the participants are categorised under Faiaoga (teachers) and Pule (school leaders - team leader and deputy principals). To further differentiate, the four teachers will be labelled as Faiaoga 1, Faiaoga 2, Faiaoga 3 and Faiaoga 4, and the four leaders as Pule 1, Pule 2, Pule 3 and Pule 4.
3. A discussion of the data collected follows.

Throughout the interviews the participants used acronyms specific to educational contexts. The first time an acronym is used in this chapter, the full term will be stated with the acronym in brackets. Thereafter, only the acronym will be used.

Findings

The opening question asked: Please tell me about yourself and your teaching experience in New Zealand.

The responses to this question are shown in Table 4.0.

Table 4.0 Participants’ data

Place of Birth		Teaching Experience		Current role in school		Responded to interview as:		Proportion of Pasifika students in participants’ schools	
NZ	7	Years 1-5	1	Scale A	1	Class teachers	4	10-15 percent	2
Pacific Island	1	5-10	2	Scale A with responsibility	2	Team leader	1	15-30 percent	1
		11-15	2		Deputy Principal	3	Deputy principals	3	80 percent or more
		16-20	2	Other		2			
		20+	1						

The participants identified as Tuvalu, Cook Island Maori, Samoan, Cook Island/English and Samoan/Maori. In total, the respondents had worked in

fifteen schools in New Zealand (mostly in the Auckland region - Central, West and South Auckland) and one had teaching experience in the United States of America.

The participants currently work in a variety of Year 1 to 8 schools from all parts of Auckland (Year 1 to 6 primary schools, Year 1 to 8 full primary schools and intermediate schools) ranging from decile 1 to 8. Deciles indicate the extent to which schools draw its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 are the ten percent of schools with the highest amount of students from low socio-economic communities and decile 10 are schools with the lowest proportion of these students. The participants varied in experience from a beginning teacher with two years experience to a teacher with thirty years experience. The participants' roles in schools also varied. The group included classroom teachers, classroom teachers with responsibilities, Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) and deputy principals (DPs). For the purposes of the research and confidentiality, the RTLB responded as a classroom teacher and a school leader (prior to taking up RTLB appointments one participant was a classroom teacher and the other was a team leader).

Question One asked: What are your views about current Pasifika student achievement in schools?

Table 4.1 Respondents' views about Pasifika achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Pasifika students are achieving below their co-horts (other ethnic groups in their year levels) and this is a concern	2	2
Pasifika students are better catered for in the current education system than in the past because school and home had similar values	2	
Assessment tools used are not relevant for Pasifika students		1
Community links are needed to better inform Pasifika parents about assessment		1

Participants' responses emphasised a deep level of concern for the perceived low achievement levels of Pasifika students as a whole group. For example:

Faiaoga 1: Not really good. Below and well below, those are their levels for basically everything, maths, reading, writing, literacy, everything.

Pule 1: Our trends follow the national trends, it's a bit concerning that our children are behind the New Zealand European students ... achievement for our PI students is quite concerning or underachievement I should say ... and something that will have to be really focused on in all schools whether you're high decile or low decile.

Despite achievement levels being low, participants were of the view that Pasifika students were better "catered for" now than in the in the past. For example:

Faiaoga 2: I feel the Pacific Island students' needs are a lot more catered for presently than in the past... I think the value system has changed.

Pasifika students were perceived by one participant to be disadvantaged before they even attempt an achievement task, as the assessment tools used were not relevant to them. For example:

Pule 4: Mostly it's a mismatch [assessment tools and Pasifika students]. I feel they're not given the right opportunities. I feel they struggle because it's always out of context, it doesn't mean anything to them to read books about snow when there's no way they have snow in the islands. I feel they're judged before they've really shown themselves. I think they start on the back foot from the first time they go into a school.

One participant noted that links between schools and the community had to be consistently maintained in order to make a difference to student achievement. For example:

Pule2: There needs to be a community link between the Pasifika families and the school ... our Pasifika parents need to be informed more than once on whatever initiatives we have in place in our schools in raising our students' achievements ... one meeting is not enough.

Question Two asked: At the schools you have taught in, what do teachers say about the achievement of Pasifika students?

Table 4.2 Perceptions of teachers' attitudes towards Pasifika student achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Professional development is needed to improve teachers' understanding of Pasifika learners	3	3
There is a discourse of Pasifika underachievement in schools	2	2
Teachers are well intentioned but ill-prepared to cater for Pasifika learners	2	2
Community engagement is a necessary component in Pasifika achievement	2	1
Expectations for Pasifika students are not as high compared to students from other ethnicities		1
Teachers are culturally sensitive to students		1

The main theme that emerged from this question was that professional development was needed for teachers to develop an understanding of Pasifika learners. However, there was tension between what was needed for the improvement of Pasifika student achievement, and the extent to which teachers held a genuine desire to focus on Pasifika achievement, especially when Pasifika students were a small group in schools:

Pule 1: When you're in a multi-cultural school and there's a high percentage of your students underachieving... the staff are fully focused on improving Pasifika achievement. When you have 1000 students and the percentage is low it becomes more of a challenge to get the staff to focus on Pacific Island achievement and see it as a concern, and see it as a national priority so it's really a lot more challenging to do PD for staff at a school like this.

Faiaoga 1: The teachers, they're really helpful, they're really good but sometimes it's also good for them to have an understanding of actually how to teach Pasifika children.

Participants perceived that the discourse about Pasifika underachievement usually placed Pasifika students in the deficit mode. Discussion was around the low achievement and underachievement of Pasifika rather than on how to improve achievement. For example:

Faiaoga 2: I think there has been a negative view about Pacific Island achievement and the tail end of achievement. PIs [Pacific Islanders] and Maori have been at that tail. They [teachers] realise that but I don't see how they're catering for those needs.

Faiaoga 3: There wasn't a lot of promotion about Pasifika achievement. I think the opposite was very much the thing.

This view of Pasifika students in the deficit mode was reflected in one participant commenting that expectations for Pasifika students were not as high as expectations for students from other cultures. For example:

Pule 2: I would have said a lot of the staff have their expectations of our Pasifika students is not as high as it is with other cultures

In the discourse on Pasifika underachievement, respondents felt that teachers were well intentioned but ill prepared to cater for Pasifika learners. For example:

Pule 1: It's not that they're not concerned about it, they treat Pacific Island kids as a homogenous group, and it's a homogenous problem and that's the way they focus on it.

Faiaoga 1: Sometimes the children's understanding is here and their [teachers] understanding is here and they don't match, that's why sometimes the children get frustrated and they just shut off... I think it goes both ways too, it goes for teachers as well.

Despite participants feeling teachers were underprepared to deal with Pasifika learners, one respondent stated teachers were culturally sensitive to students:

Pule 3: I think that they [teachers] would very much see that they were culturally sensitive to the kids ... and accepting what they bring to the table, and then working from that.

Although community engagement was identified as a necessary component for Pasifika achievement, participants inferred community engagement happened sporadically and Pasifika parents were perceived as not participating in their childrens' education. Comments included:

Faiaoga 3: I had a tutor teacher who used to visit families and talk to the families, even though there was a language barrier he would make it a point to try and bridge gaps... he's the only one that I know who would actively go and talk to the parents..

Faiaoga 1: Parents do need to help...because at the end of the day it's their children - they go home.

Question Three asked: What role have school leaders played in influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Table 4.3 Perceptions of school leaders' attitudes towards Pasifika student achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
School leaders need to make connections with parents and the community	3	4
Principals and school leaders have to 'walk the talk' in regards to Pasifika achievement	2	4
School leaders play an influential role in Pasifika achievement through their actions	1	4
School leaders' attitudes towards Pasifika learners are better now compared to the past		3
The Ministry has helped make Pasifika achievement a priority in schools	1	1
School leaders expect Pasifika teachers to meet the needs of Pasifika learners although they say the 'best teachers for Pasifika learners are the best teachers'	2	
Pasifika teachers felt responsible for Pasifika learners although they felt the responsibility was a shared one	2	

Seven respondents identified that connections between the school and the community had to be strengthened, as the connections were not authentic. Respondents found school leaders were either not doing enough to build

partnerships with the community or had good intentions but did not have the capacity to follow through. For example:

Faiaoga 4: They [school leaders] found it difficult to connect with the community.

Faiaoga 3: They [school leaders] need to be more in the fore-front they need to be seen as helping to promote, at least bring the parents in for those informal meetings and get interpreters if they can't bridge the gap in communication.

Perhaps it was because school leaders found it difficult to build strong relationships with the community that six respondents maintained leaders only played 'lip service' to Pasifika achievement and did not 'walk the talk'. Leaders' surface approach to Pasifika achievement also directly influenced the values teachers had toward Pasifika students. For example:

Faiaoga 2: They certainly identify the needs. But in the way of support and actually meeting those needs and helping with achievement I haven't actually seen anything really. A lip surface type kind of approach to meeting those needs and the support because, I haven't seen anything in the way of initiatives being rolled out in schools to meet those needs.

Faiaoga 3: I wonder whether or not it's a criteria, [or] whether it's just ticking a box ... they [school leaders] don't necessarily 'walk the talk'.

As already stated, school leaders were identified as playing an influential role in whether Pasifika students were viewed positively or negatively and in how teaching and learning for Pasifika students was prioritised in schools. For example:

Pule 4: I know they were influential because I think we all realised if it's not coming from the top then it's not seen through to the end ... if you don't have that from the top the chances of succeeding are a lot less.

Pule 1: ... My principal is very well read and ... is a continuous learner so he's often throwing stuff at us about Pasifika achievement, priority learners, inclusiveness, being culturally responsive ... It's filtering it down throughout the school.

In some schools Pasifika teachers felt frustrated that as Pasifika teachers they were seen as being the only ones responsible for Pasifika achievement solely because they were Pasifika. Comments included:

Faiaoga 2: My principal and DP say that with PI students there is a need there for support, but I see that they think that PIs can help PIs, that they look to Pacific Island teachers to meet those needs.

Faiaoga 3: We [Pasifika teachers] feel like we are having to initiate things on our own and it should be everyone's responsibility because the belief was, ...the best teachers for our kids are the best teachers so... I reckon our top management, our senior management, should actually follow that belief.

Despite respondents' frustration at how leaders were responding to Pasifika achievement three respondents perceived leaders' attitudes towards Pasifika learners were more positive now than in the past. For example:

Pule 3: [In the past] if they didn't do well you just tried to help them as best as you could, where as now, we know so much more about teaching and learning, kids these days are much better served it's much much better.

Question Four asked: In the schools you have taught in, who has set the goals and expectations for Pasifika student achievement?

Table 4.4 Goals and expectations for Pasifika students in schools

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Principal or management team set the goals for Pasifika student achievement	4	4
Teachers were consulted about goal setting once the leadership teams set the goals	3	3
Pasifika achievement goals were shared with parents	1	4
Students were involved in setting their own goals	3	2
Desire to share goals with parents but connections were hard to make or sustain.	3	1
Expectations for Pasifika students helped determine achievement goals	2	1
Teachers set the goals for Pasifika student achievement.	2	
Assistance for goal setting was from outside agency		1
Parents more interested in whether their child is learning rather than levels		1

The main theme that emerged in response to this question was that there was a ‘top-down’ response to the setting of schools goals. The senior management set the school goals before *consulting* with the board, *consulting* with teachers and then *sharing/telling* the goals with parents. Again there appeared to be tension or frustration between the leaders and teachers, and between schools and parents. Responses included:

Pule 1: As a senior leadership team we set the targets, then we consult with the Board and see what their feelings [are] about things and then we write it into all the documentation. Then we consult with staff and then our curriculum directors.

Pule 4: It comes from the top first and then it spreads out and we all discuss it. There has to be a buy in by everybody otherwise it won't work.

Faiaoga 2: I think on a management level they make those decisions and then it comes down to us but you don't necessarily agree on those things because I think with the different leaders they value different things.

Pule 1: We find that we don't get a good turn out from Pasifika ... We consult at the beginning of the year with Pacific Island parents. We get their input on where they see their children need help and then we report back to them at the end of the year.

Faiaoga 4: When we invited parents in not everyone was able to make it so it was hard to connect in parents in that way.

Students were also seen as playing a role in the setting of their own learning goals. Responses included:

Faiaoga 4: In terms of goals the students had a huge role in their own goals and self-reflections.

Perceptions about the capacity of what Pasifika students were able to learn influenced the achievement expectations for them. For example:

Pule 2: Our principal prior to this had similar view to what I just explained that our staff thought [expectations of our Pasifika students is not as high as it is with other cultures].

The National Standards (Ministry of Education, 2010) was seen as helping to bring Pasifika achievement to the forefront in one school:

Faiaoga 3: Everything is very much National Standards driven. I think the criteria really, is still driven by the Ministry.

Question Five asked: In the schools you have taught in, do the principals and leadership team prioritise resource spending for Pasifika achievement? How?

Table 4.5 How resourcing for Pasifika achievement is prioritised

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Schools must have resourcing for Pasifika learners because there are ESOL programmes and bilingual units	2	2
Learning support programmes provided to accelerate achievement for students who were not achieving, some of these students were Pasifika	1	2
Not enough resources provided for Pasifika learners	3	
Resourcing for Pasifika learners was not discussed	1	1
Resourcing for Pasifika PD was provided for Pasifika teachers only	2	
Electronic resources provided	1	
Some resources provided for Pasifika students were not relevant to them	1	

This question was difficult for respondents to answer, as they were not aware if there were budgets within schools set aside specifically to improve Pasifika achievement. Four respondents discussed the human resources within the school, the ethnicity of their school population and the presence of bilingual units and determined that there was funding for Pasifika student achievement. Comments included:

Faiaoga 3: I think they do. They prioritise the budget for Pasfika learning because a lot of it goes towards ESOL programmes.

Pule 2: Ninety percent Pasifika population. Bilingual units have their own budgets.

As there were Pasifika students in learning support programmes, it was perceived that Pasifika students were being resourced indirectly through learning support programmes rather than being specifically catered for. Comments included:

Pule 1: Pupils who are well below, we have the progressive learning centre which is your typical Senco.

Three respondents stated there needed to be more commitment in schools to: (i) get resources relevant to Pasifika students, and (ii) to employ more Pasifika teachers. For example:

Faiaoga 1: Sometimes the textbooks we have go above the children. You know running records and we give them a book about snow boarding. Some Pasifika children they have no idea what the book is about.

Faiaoga 2: I don't see him [principal] actually putting any kind of resources into Pacific Island students really specifically, but I know that they try and put human resources into the general need. It would be nice for him to just commit to more PI teachers and investing in resources and curriculum needs in that area.

Faiaoga 1: We need more Pasifika resources in their own language ... it's more relevant for our children that cannot speak English very well.

Two respondents commented Pasifika achievement was everyone's responsibility and were frustrated that PD on Pasifika achievement was offered only to Pasifika teachers and not to all staff. For example:

Faiaoga 3: There's a course coming up ... he's [the principal] investing into a few teachers going, so PI teachers are going, there's a handful of us going and it's exciting. Everyone has PI students in their class and if he says that the best teachers are the best teachers for PI students- then that's everyone.

Two respondents did not know if resourcing for Pasifika achievement had been discussed at their schools. For example:

Pule 3: I don't think we have really had that conversation, to be honest, as a team. I don't think we've even looked at it that way. We will now.

Question Six asked: How have the leadership teams and principals in the schools you have taught in, improved the quality of teaching and the curriculum for Pasifika students?

Table 4.6 How leaders and principals improve the quality of teaching and curriculum for Pasifika students

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
improves teaching and learning for Pasifika students	3	3
Differentiated learning catered for the needs of Pasifika learners		3
The principal decided when maths and reading would be taught school wide	1	
The curriculum is responsive to the needs of Pasifika learners		1
The leadership team challenges teachers to be inclusive		1
Self-review of class programmes is used to improve teaching and learning		1
Mentoring is used to improve teaching and learning	1	
Leaders adopt a 'one size fits all' approach'	1	
School is good at celebrating success and this promotes family support	1	
School vision put together by the management team and then teachers are consulted	1	

Professional development emerged as the main practice identified as improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. However professional development to specifically improve Pasifika achievement was only identified by two participants - one who did it on her own and another who was part of a Pasifika team who provided the PD for her own staff. Comments included:

Faiaoga 4: We had a Pasifika team...we did a few staff meetings where we looked at different strategies to encourage Pasifika achievement.

Faiaoga 1: A couple of weeks ago I went and did my own research. And I came back and shared what the people from the Ministry told me.

Differentiated learning where children are given work at their level was a teaching practice identified by three respondents as improving learning outcomes for Pasifika students. For example:

Pule 4: We were very much into differentiated teaching. It was a big push always in our school that every child should be taught at their level.

Two respondents stated teachers being given the freedom to plan their teaching to suit the needs of students allowed them to be responsive to the needs of the students and the Pasifika community:

Pule 3: We have a high trust model so I think teachers have that freedom and that ability to tailor make to kids' needs...I think the curriculum is really responsive to the needs of our Pasifika community.

Only one participant each mentioned a number of comments. These comments traversed such areas as making connections with families through celebrating success and trying to make children fit into the curriculum rather than adapting the curriculum to meet students' needs.

Question Seven asked: Do school leaders promote constructive problem-solving talks about Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement? How do they do this?

Table 4.7 Do leaders promote constructive discussions about Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement?

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
There is discussion about Pasifika achievement but it is not constructive	2	4
Leaders do not promote constructive problem solving discussions about Pasifika student achievement	1	2
Constructive talks was with Pasifika parents about Pasifika student achievement	2	
Pasifika teachers have ownership of Pasifika achievement	2	
Leaders have had constructive conversations with staff		1

This question drew mixed responses. The respondents once again showed frustration that the discourse about Pasifika achievement had not changed significantly since when they first entered the profession. There was also frustration that there appeared to be little talk about how Pasifika achievement could be improved; hence, the discourse about Pasifika achievement was not constructive. This was the main theme that emerged. Respondents also noted that there were not enough avenues explored as to how to improve Pasifika achievement. Comments included:

Faiaoga 1: Ever since I've been here it's been the same, like we always talk about how Pasifika children are low achievers among their peers, but then what are you going to do about it, what are we going to do about it? I mean it's all very well you're repeating yourself 10000 times, sorry, but it's like the problem is there so what are we going to do? ... You keep repeating the same thing but you just don't do anything so ... if you've got an answer come and tell me.

Pule 3: We know what the results tell us, and we probably have 'a way' of improving those results and working with those kids ... But I don't think we've found more than one way. I don't think we've got enough ways.

The lack of talk about Pasifika achievement was perceived by three respondents to show a lack of urgency about Pasifika achievement. For example:

Faiaoga 2: I don't think it's a priority perhaps, I mean they've [management] got lots of other things that they roll out.

However, one respondent commented that the leaders in her school actively discouraged negative talk about Pasifika achievement. For example:

Pule 2: I think as leaders we have to be attuned to what people are saying out there and talk to them about it ... dampen out that culture when it starts coming back.

Two respondents once again commented that Pasifika achievement was seen as a Pasifika issue best responded to by Pasifika teachers. For example:

Faiaoga 3: They [management] tend to put everything into if it's a Pasifika issue then it belongs in the Pasifika world. So therefore they find the first Pasifika teacher and say why is this happening. Where as, you can't really diagnose the same problem for everybody.

Question Eight asked: In the schools you have taught in, have principals and school leaders established an environment that supports Pasifika achievement? How?

Table 4.8 How leaders have built a school environment that supports Pasifika achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Leaders influence the culture of schools	1	3
Pasifika events including Pasifika languages are being promoted in schools	2	2
The school environment has good physical resources and activities but does not support Pasifika achievement and Pasifika learning	2	1
There are special Pasifika groups within the school	1	
Pasifika achievement is built into the school appraisal system		1

Two main themes emerged from this question with four respondents each. The first was that leaders influence the culture and environment of the school by being 'accepting' of families, encouraging the staff to play a part in developing the culture of the school by having input in the development of goals for the school and creating a sense of belonging for all the diverse groups in schools. For example:

Faiaoga 3: [The principal] has always been very inclusive of his community. So community engagement days like forums, he'll have families come in for open interview days and family fun nights and things like that. I think he's very accepting of trying to encourage our families to come in.

Pule 2: ... So this principal comes in, sees the big gaps and says, right. I need to get my team sorted first, the management ... we needed to change the

culture of our school so that all staff were believing [they] had a part to play,

The second theme that emerged was that schools were actively promoting Pasifika events. However, it was questioned whether these events actually improved Pasifika children's achievement. For example:

Pule 4: Although it may not have increased their level of education we did promote the languages. All for two weeks each time

Faiaoga 1: They [parents] usually come when we do the island weeks, but it's only for the Friday afternoon, for an hour and then they disappear... you need them now, every week.

Similarly two respondents noted that although there were extra resources and extra curricular activities provided, these did not appear to support Pasifika achievement as some of the resources were not relevant to Pasifika students and the learning experiences were not meaningful for Pasifika students. This sometimes led to student frustration and contributed to Pasifika students not learning. For example:

Faiaoga 2: I see a lot of PI students thriving on sports and choir and all these other opportunities that they have. But in terms of achievement I don't see much happening, no.

Faiaoga 1: For Pasifika and Maori children I think the teachers need to make the learning experiences more relevant and meaningful for them. Pasifika, we have our own culture you know, we eat certain food, and you do certain things like go to church and sometimes I think that children would prefer examples that are relevant to them you know like for Maths you can make up like Jordan's family went to the flea market and they bought 10 taro or something you know. Sometimes the textbooks we have it just goes above the children. You know the running records and we give them a book about snow boarding, some Pasifika children they have no idea what the book is about...They're not going to learn if they can't understand what's happening. They'll feel frustrated more than anything.

One respondent commented that as Pasifika achievement was built into their staff appraisal system it was part of their school culture:

Pule 1: I think the other thing that we've done is we've made it [Pasifika achievement] part of our performance management system.

Question Nine asked: In the schools you have taught in, how have leaders created connections with parents and the community to improve Pasifika achievement?

Table 4.9 How leaders have created connections within and beyond school

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Leaders make connections with parents and the community in a variety of ways (parent workshops, parent meetings, cultural evenings, having community rooms)	4	4
Leaders needed to persevere to find ways to connect with families and to sustain these connections	3	2
Connections have to be made beyond the immediate school community	1	1

All respondents commented that their schools make connections with parents in a variety of ways. However, the schools were always in the position of power, wanting feedback on programmes they had implemented or reporting back on these programmes. Schools wanted to connect with parents but parents were not asked what they wanted. In some cases parents were viewed in a 'deficit' mode. That is, there were perceived gaps in parents' knowledge and the schools attempted to bridge these gaps. Comments included:

Pule 2: We're planning evenings where we'd have our children performing because we find that's what gets parents in. The last one we had was a maths learning night. So...come in, watch your child perform and then we go straight into what we want to report back... we're forever asking for feedback on programmes. And then we have our shared parent lunches.

Pule 4: We've had a lot of different evenings like budgeting evenings, cooking to teach. We would bring the community in if they didn't know how to cook and we would supply everything.

More than half the respondents felt that more needed to be done to build the relationships between schools and parents. It was perceived that what schools were doing was not working because Pasifika achievement was not improving. For example:

Faiaoga 1: ...But if you want to focus on Pasifika I think you need more, I think we need to do a bit more ... find a time and a place where you can get a lot of parents where parents can come it. I think that would be worth it than having these workshops ... [with] only two people sitting there. Well, we're doing the same things. It's not working.

Pule 3: I think we are probably still trying to find a way where our Pasifika parents will come to us and I don't think we are successful, I think we have spikes of success, but I don't think we have found a way yet for consistent participation. And sometimes the silence of them not coming in what does that tell us, I'm not sure. It might tell us a lot.

Additionally two respondents advocated for schools to engage with contributing schools, intermediate schools, high schools and with all Pasifika communities so parents could get a fuller understanding about education for their children. For example:

Faiaoga 3: We need to have some sort of programme established so we can help our parents understand what are the differences when their kids transition to Year 7 and again to high school...it just makes sense.

Question Ten asked: What school leadership practices do you think positively influence Pasifika student achievement?

Table 4.10 Leadership practices that positively influence Pasifika student achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Leaders need to build a school culture and environment that supports and actively promotes Pasifika achievement	1	4
Leaders need to recognise the role families play in shaping their students	2	2
Leaders have to 'walk the talk'	1	2
A combination of leadership practices is needed	3	
Professional development should be provided for teachers about Pasifika learners	2	1
Leaders have to actively consult with the wider community		1

Ensuring the school environment and the school culture fosters Pasifika achievement was the leadership practice that emerged in answer to this question. A successful environment was identified as having a culture where staff believed Pasifika students can achieve, where students feel the teachers believe in them and where students also had self-belief. The key to this was leaders and teachers building relationships and showing empathy. For example:

Faiaoga 3: They [students] need to feel that they have the teachers that are really there for them and will vouch for them. Also it's that alofa.

Pule 2: The main one would be the thinking of our staff ... getting them to understand, yeah beliefs and expectations of Pasifika student achievement and that they can make a difference.

Pule 3: [Pasifika] kids seeing themselves as successful learners.

The second practice identified by respondents is that leaders have to acknowledge the role that families play in shaping their children and to respect the trust parents place in school leaders and teachers. For example:

Faiaoga 4: The parents have put a lot of work into moulding their baby to come to school and to learn and I don't know if some teachers and management understand that work and that trust Pasifika parents have.

Three respondents advised that school leaders have to show through their actions that they believe in Pasifika students because Pasifika students recognise insincerity. For example:

Faiaoga 3: I definitely believe at the heart of it you have to walk the talk. I do believe our kids are not naive, they're not stupid ... But if they feel like their principal is not behind them they definitely won't succeed.

Professional development was another leadership practice identified as improving Pasifika achievement. Three respondents argued it is important not to assume teachers know how to teach Pasifika students. They advocated that leaders provide professional development about Pasifika learners run by Pasifika people or people who had experience working with Pasifika. Comments included:

Pule 1: I think that the teachers are given PD around Pasifika students-that we're not under the assumption that they know what to do

Faiaoga 4: Professional development from Pasifika or people that have worked in schools that have a high level of Pasifika and have that experience with the children, the families, the community that's probably what I would say.

One respondent argued that the message about Pasifika achievement should not be restricted to the local schools but should be spread to the wider community. For example:

Faiaoga 3: These are all the families that are all interconnected. You know someone knows somebody or someone's related to somebody we need to get behind a lot more of the community initiatives for our kids

Question Eleven asked: What leadership practices have impacted negatively on Pasifika student achievement?

Table 4.11 Leadership practices that impact negatively on Pasifika student achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Lack of focus on relationships is detrimental to Pasifika achievement	2	1
There needs to be a shift in assumptions and expectations from the deficit model (what Pasifika students can't do) to what Pasifika students can do	1	1
Pasifika students can be forgotten or not catered for when the school is predominantly made up of another culture	1	1
Pasifika students may identify with more than one ethnic group		2
School disciplinary practices don't match with the culture of students		1
Negative school culture maintained by school leaders		1
Using resources children cannot relate to and contexts not authentic to Pasifika students put Pasifika students at a disadvantage		1

Responses to this question varied. Three respondents identified the need for leaders to focus on relationships so that teachers know their children, leaders know their students' parents, and parents feel welcomed into schools. Comments included:

Pule 1: Not focusing on the relationships. It is really important that these teachers know their children, and if you don't that's when it becomes an issue.

Faiaoga 3: We're finding that we depend too much on our strong families...not building new partnerships.

Faiaoga 1: I think sometimes they [parents] don't like management ... They're not happy with the way we do things here ... I think for our parents, if we don't smile at them, or we don't welcome them, they won't come in ... but if you make them feel welcome then they would walk into the room.

Another negative practice respondents identified was how Pasifika students were already prejudged and found wanting. Comments included:

Faiaoga 2: I think sometimes the research that shows that PIs are at the bottom end of the spectrum of achievement ... focusing on those things they [Pasifika students] can't do and not even looking or focusing on what they have been able to achieve or been successful in.

Pule 3: I think it's probably around pre-conceived ideas [and] beliefs around what these kids can or can't do.

In addition to having pre-conceived ideas about Pasifika students, respondents cautioned against labelling Pasifika students as identifying primarily with just one group. For example:

Pule 4: You have to remember when we say we have a big percentage of Pacific Islanders and then you break that down, and then again we are all Pacific Islanders, but we have our own cultures as well.

Two participants commented that when Pasifika students only made up a small portion of the school population it becomes challenging to get staff to focus on Pasifika students and Pasifika achievement. For example:

Faiaoga 4: They [the school] didn't really cater for Pasifika students...I think he [principal] forgot. I think they [Pasifika students] can easily be forgotten when you are in a school that is predominantly of one culture.

Pule 1: When you have 1000 students and the percentage is low it becomes more of a challenge to get the staff to focus on Pacific Island achievement and see it as a concern, and see it as a national priority.

A negative practice identified by one respondent was how a leader's passive response to negative talk about Pasifika students reinforces negative perceptions about Pasifika students. For example:

Pule 2: I'd hear people, like the leaders...I'd hear their conversations - 'he only comes here to eat his lunch, and oh well, as long as he's eating his lunch and he's not causing any trouble that's fine'. But I wouldn't see her [the principal] stepping up for the children. And I thought well if you're not

they're not going to see any importance put on that they're going to keep talking like that.

As previously mentioned by another respondent in response to another question, the use of resources children did not relate to put Pasifika students at a disadvantage. For example:

Pule 4: Some of our resources like our reading kits and eAsTTle, books about skiing in the snow, it means nothing to them [students], the contexts - they're not authentic to them. And I think that always puts them at a disadvantage.

Question Twelve asked: If you had the opportunity to advise principals and school leaders about improving Pasifika student achievement what would your advice be?

Table 4.12 Advice for how leaders can improve Pasifika student achievement

Sub-themes	Faiaoga Number of responses	Pule Number of responses
Build and maintain relationships with teachers, families and the community	4	4
Professional development provided for all staff to build an understanding about Pasifika learners and Pasifika culture	2	2
Pasifika achievement can be made a priority in their school and visible through school documentation	1	1
View Pasifika students as being a strength to the school community		1

All eight respondents responded that they would advise school leaders to encourage, participate and advocate for strong relationships between all the stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, school leaders) in order to improve Pasifika achievement. The respondents were frustrated and seemed resigned to the notion that there was no reciprocity in the relationships between school leaders and parents, and between school leaders and teachers. Comments included:

Faiaoga 1: My advice would be they need to listen to Pasifika teachers and they need to listen when parents do come and share...They need to take it seriously and they need to sit with them and figure out a way of helping and making things work for both home and here for the child ... the how part is the important part, how that's the agent part, that's the part we really need to work on ... I feel management, they should be the friendliest people at the school.

Pule 4: I think incorporate what the parents are saying because if you listen to them then they in return may listen to you, you'll understand their wants and needs. Principals always know what they want and need, always. But if they can slot in what the parents are asking for it makes it a lot easier for the child.

Faioaga 2: I think effective school leadership is listening to the teachers, is working with the teachers, is knowing the needs of the children and the community which is important as well ... If you can get parents on-board they're the best resources/support for their children. ... I think when we have that partnership and that connection then I think we can do more towards helping our children.

Pule 1: I think they really need to work at building relationships, not only with the child but with the family. And that's probably the biggest challenge, connecting and engaging with the community.

Pule 2: I'd say build and maintain relationships with families to let them know that this is what we do I'm not saying, change the parents' way of thinking or change the culture, but find that middle ground.

Three respondents would advise leaders to have PD about Pasifika learners available to all staff. The PD would not only assist teachers in their understanding of Pasifika learners but also help teachers to recognise that Pasifika achievement is everyone's responsibility not solely the responsibility of Pasifika teachers. For example:

Pule 1: I just think they [leaders] need to build an understanding of Pasifika children, Pasifika culture.

Faiaoga 3: ... why not send non-Pasifika teacher [for PD on Pasifika achievement], they need to see that world, to be engaged in it.

One respondent said she would advise leaders to view Pasifika students in their schools as an asset and to build on this. For example:

Pule 3: I think it would have to be along the lines of seeing Pasifika kids in school communities as strength. And how do we build on that so we can all benefit as a school community.

Summary

This chapter has presented all the data collected through semi-structured interviews about teachers' experiences, expectations and perceptions in regards to educational leadership for Pasifika achievement. Two themes have emerged from the data: (i) the importance of effective leadership for Pasifika achievement and (ii) the significance of reciprocity in changing the 'under achievement'. The next chapter will explore these themes in more detail and link them to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter five: Discussion of findings

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the significant findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The discussion will be framed by the research questions:

1. What are Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership?
2. What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers' perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Two over-arching themes have been identified in the data collected. These are: (i) the importance of effective leadership for Pasifika achievement; and (ii) the role of reciprocity in building Pasifika success. These themes will structure the discussion in this chapter. This chapter will also explore the links between the themes, the sub-themes and the literature reviewed. Due to the interconnectedness of the two questions, the themes identified in the data collected may be used in response to both questions.

The importance of effective educational leadership for Pasifika achievement

The first major theme that emerged from the data was *the importance of effective educational leadership for Pasifika achievement*. The sub-themes included in this theme are the role of leadership in Pasifika achievement, leadership practices perceived as hindering Pasifika achievement and leadership practices that are perceived as improving Pasifika achievement.

The role of leadership in Pasifika achievement

The findings in this research study concur with the literature that educational leadership plays a pivotal role in improving student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bush, 2003; Lashway, 2006; Southworth, 2011). All eight participants in this study suggested school leaders played an influential role in Pasifika achievement.

It follows then that school leaders may also play a crucial role in the 'under achievement' of Pasifika students. This study and the literature show that changing the 'under achievement' of Pasifika achievement requires sustainable change (Education Review Office, 2012; Tuafuti, 2013; Tuioti, 2002). Sustainable change in turn requires leadership with a moral purpose (Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). This study shows that although changing the 'under achievement' of Pasifika learners is a government priority (Ministry of Education, 2012b) leaders do not necessarily identify the improvement of Pasifika achievement as a 'moral purpose'.

Although school principals are central to driving new initiatives the findings in this research study, like the literature, indicated leadership in primary schools is a shared responsibility and that all the primary teachers who participated in this study had distributed leadership in their schools. Participants identified school leaders as the principal, the DP, AP, school directors, team and syndicate leaders, senior teachers, directors of learning or 'management'. 'Management' was the term usually used to label teams made up of the principal and the deputy or assistant principals. This is supported in the literature by Southworth (2011) and Weber (1996) who explain shared or distributed leadership shifts the notion of leadership as being encompassed in one person to the notion that organisations have multiple leaders.

The findings show that participants expected school leaders to be sincere in their relationships with students and their parents, to show students and the community that they cared by showing the values of alofa (love) and fa'aloalo (respect) through their behavior. As one interviewee said, "*I feel management ... they just need to be nice to people, and you know, just talk to them.*" This is supported in the literature Hargreaves and Fink (2012) who argue, sustainability is likely to happen if there is leadership for caring. Another interviewee noted, "*If they [students] feel like their principal is not behind them they definitely won't succeed.*" This is supported in the literature by Cummins (2000) who notes people are likely to put in much more effort for teachers who believe and care about them than for teachers who did not consider them capable. Similarly,

Price Waterhouse Coopers (2007, p.1; cited in Coleman, 2011) states “the *behaviours* of school leaders have a greater impact on pupil performance than school *structures* or leadership models.” This perceived lack of sincerity in some leaders’ relationships with their Pasifika communities, suggests that the foundations for building relationships to improve Pasifika achievement are not secure in some schools.

This research study found that participants expected school leaders to be genuine in their intentions by acknowledging that their personal values shape their relationships. As one participant noted, “... *the different leaders they value different things.*” In the literature Waitere (2008), echoes this sentiment. She maintains that ‘cultural’ leadership requires all educational leaders to be explicit about the values and beliefs that underpin their leadership practice and actions. The findings reveal that the way leaders viewed Pasifika students (whether it was positively or negatively) directly influenced the values teachers placed on Pasifika students. One leader interviewed noted, “*Once the leaders have that knowledge and that belief, then it definitely filters down to our teachers... changing the values that our teachers have towards our Pasifika students.*” This is reflected in the literature by Coleman (2011), who notes leaders are responsible for setting the culture and modeling behavior, so if valuing the diversity of individual students and staff is a part of the school ethos this should feed through to every aspect of their leadership. It is also reflected in the work of Gunter (2006) who states diversity is a normal feature of humanity; however, whether it is seen as positive or negative is dependent on political, economic and social structures. Therefore school leaders also have to be reflective, they have to lead the way in schools by examining and exploring how their values and actions impact on Pasifika achievement. Sustainable change has to be led (Scott, 1999).

The findings reveal that the assumptions about what Pasifika students could and could not do was influenced by how Pasifika students were viewed by school leaders. These assumptions then in turn influenced teacher expectations of Pasifika students. These findings are supported in the literature by Alton-Lee (2003) who identified ethnicity as one of the two factors that play a role in

teacher expectations that are unrelated to students' actual capability. It is also supported in the literature by Brown et al., (2008) who states that assumptions or perceptions are often barriers that have to be identified and disestablished before the doors into schools are open. Because of the variation of how Pasifika students were viewed and the assumptions made about Pasifika learners, this research study found there was a lack of consistency in schools in regards to expectations of Pasifika learners. The findings show high expectations on their own are not enough to improve Pasifika achievement. This is supported in the literature by Alton-Lee (2003) who notes high expectations are necessary for improving student achievement but can be counterproductive when not supported by quality teaching. Therefore leaders should be questioning what quality teaching for Pasifika learners entails, and what leadership practices are required in order for this to happen. The findings show that whilst the leaders are well intentioned towards Pasifika achievement, the statistics in regard to Pasifika achievement suggest leaders' capabilities do not match their intentions.

Leadership practices perceived as hindering Pasifika achievement

This research study reveals that one of the major obstacles in improving Pasifika achievement was the imbalance between leaders' intentions and their capacity or capability to improve Pasifika achievement. Educational leadership encompasses both management and leadership because "leadership is needed to drive and management to enact" (Starratt, 2003, p.24). The findings show that in the critical area of Pasifika achievement, what leaders espoused did not match their actions. Participants expected school leaders to show they were genuine in their desire to improve Pasifika achievement by 'walking the talk'. However, while there was a lot of discussion around Pasifika achievement, there was no sense of urgency about it. Using Schein's (2010) levels of organisational culture, the findings show that leaders' espoused beliefs and values were not perceived as matching their basic underlying assumptions about Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement. This led to teacher frustration and Pasifika achievement not showing significant improvement.

Cardno (2012) suggests that when engaging with teachers, leaders need to build productive relationships that allow critical problems to be addressed. The findings show that Pasifika under-achievement was not addressed constructively. This led to participants feeling disheartened and frustrated. One participant stated, “... *they say all these things, which is really good. But the how part is the important part, ... that’s the part we really need to work on.*” This frustration is reflected in the literature by Barnett et al., (2001) who found that the more fervently principals espoused abstract vision statements, the more negatively their teachers reacted. Additionally, the findings show leaders did not always seek alternative ways of teaching Pasifika students. One participant noted, “*We probably have ‘a way’ of improving those results and working with those kids... But I don’t think we’ve found more than one way. I don’t think we’ve got enough ways.*” Another participant was more blunt when she said, “*We’re doing the same things. It’s not working.*” The literature suggests educators do need to do something different to change the Pasifika achievement trend (Ferguson et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2013; Tuafuti, 2013, Tunmer et al., 2006). This is also supported by the Education Review Office (2012) report on improving education outcomes for Pacific learners, which found little evidence that schools respond to the diversity, identity, language and cultures of Pasifika learners. Therefore leaders must show fortitude in their approach to Pasifika achievement. They must lead the charge to find answers to the ‘under achievement’ of Pasifika students. They need to have the courage to be innovative in their approach to Pasifika achievement, to persevere when the going gets tough, and they need to begin the process by having the ‘hard’ discussions about Pasifika achievement. The rhetoric around Pasifika achievement has to be linked to actions related to improving educational outcomes for Pasifika learners; otherwise the talk is not constructive.

A further example of the mismatch between leaders’ intentions and their capacity to improve Pasifika achievement was the reassignment of responsibility for Pasifika achievement in some schools. This research study found that in some schools Pasifika teachers were seen as being responsible for Pasifika achievement because they were Pasifika. This suggests that either Pasifika

achievement was in the 'too hard' basket, because leaders did not have the capability to fully take on the responsibility for Pasifika achievement or, of more concern, that Pasifika achievement was not a priority. This is not in keeping with the *Kiwi leadership for principals* document which states that the principal's core role is to lead both the learning and the organisation, in order to enhance educational outcomes for all young people (Ministry of Education, 2008). Pasifika achievement falls into this domain. Amituanai-Tolosa et al., (2009) hold that closing the achievement gap between Pasifika and other students is one of the current Minister of Education's goals and is a key focus for the Ministry of Education. Nowhere in the literature I have reviewed does it say the responsibility for Pasifika achievement lies solely with Pasifika teachers. The findings show that Pasifika achievement is perceived to be everyone's responsibility. As one teacher interviewed said, "*The best teachers for our kids are the best teachers.*" This notion is supported in the literature by Alton-Lee (2003) who states that, educational leaders have to be mindful that what works to improve the achievement of advantaged students is what works for disadvantaged or 'at-risk' students (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 6).

Another leadership practice perceived to have a negative effect on Pasifika achievement was in the selection of resources used for teaching and learning. The findings show that, although most teachers tried to be 'culturally responsive' some assessment tools used to evaluate learning disadvantaged Pasifika students as they could not relate to them. As one participant said, "*We give them a book about snow boarding. Some Pasifika children they have no idea what that book is about.*" This finding is also supported by the Education Review Office (2012) report which explained that large proportions of schools are still not carefully examining the achievement of Pacific students, using Pacific contexts in the classroom, responding to the individual needs of Pacific learners, or involving Pacific parents (Education Review Office, 2012). The findings also identified that learning experiences had to be "*more relevant and meaningful*" for Pasifika students. This is supported in the literature by Tunmer et al., (2006) who explain that differences in experiences and knowledge at school entry can become disadvantages if they are not adequately addressed by the education

system (Tunmer et al., 2006). The findings show that the mismatch of learning experiences and tools, lead to both student and teacher frustration. This suggests then that in some schools teachers and students are, to quote Tuafuti (2013) 'under-prepared' (p.95). Therefore, leaders in schools have to consider how to be culturally responsive to the students in their schools. For Pasifika students this means building meaningful relationships with students and their families even before students start primary school. This can be done through enrolment procedures and induction meetings, so students' prior knowledge can be used in the school curriculum. Being culturally responsive also means providing teachers with the professional development required.

The most valid indicators of quality teaching are student outcomes of a high standard across diverse groups of students (Alton-Lee, 2003). The research findings suggest that 'quality teaching' for Pasifika students may not be consistently delivered in some schools. Whilst this research and the literature show that effective leaders provide teachers with the professional learning needed for the successful execution of their jobs (Waters et al., 2004), the findings suggest that the professional learning offered to teachers working with Pasifika students was inadequate. Participants advocated that leaders provide professional development about Pasifika learners run by Pasifika people or people who had experience working with Pasifika students. The findings show that professional development related to Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement was either not made available in some schools, or offered only to Pasifika teachers. Therefore this suggests that in some schools, leaders either did not consider that professional development about Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement would improve Pasifika achievement, or that they did not consider this type of professional development relevant to the improvement of Pasifika achievement. This leadership decision may be interpreted as either a lack of judgment, a lack of knowledge about how to improve Pasifika achievement, or a lack of commitment towards Pasifika achievement. The question that appears not to have been explored in depth by some school leaders is that of why the professional development currently offered in their schools is

not impacting on Pasifika learners, and if the professional development is not effective, what the alternatives might be.

Leadership practices that are perceived as improving Pasifika achievement

This research study indicates that school leaders recognise the effective leadership practices needed to improve student achievement. The findings indicate school leaders use the same 'best practices' or dimensions that the literature claims effective leaders use - goal setting, setting; developing people; improving teaching and learning; and establishing an orderly and supportive learning environment (Lashway, 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Weber, 1996). However, whilst the implementation of these practices may have been effective for the majority of students in schools, the findings, like the literature, show that the improvement of achievement outcomes for Pasifika students is minimal (Education Review Office, 2012). Therefore, these practices need to be more specifically directed at the improvement of achievement outcomes for Pasifika learners. For instance if the goal is to lift Pasifika achievement then leaders have to be explicit about this; otherwise the goal of improving Pasifika achievement can be lost in the general school goal of lifting school achievement. Leaders also need to identify the actions that will be necessary in achieving this goal and the leadership practices that have to be put in place. Finally, leaders and teachers also have to be accountable in raising the 'under achievement' of Pasifika students, otherwise, as already established, the goals are empty rhetoric.

Tuioti (2002) recommends policies that require schools to be accountable for meeting set targets to raise Pasifika student achievement. Although this recommendation appears to still be 'aspirational' in some schools, this research study indicates that this is happening, to some extent, in some schools. This research revealed that in one school where the leaders led professional learning, Pasifika achievement was made a priority and was included in the performance management documentation. This meant Pasifika achievement was not just discussed but that teachers were including it in their inquiries about their

teaching practice. This school demonstrated effective leadership practice as outlined in the literature by Lashway (2006) and Seashore et al., (2010), creating and sustaining the conditions that enable and encourage teachers and students to do their best work.

Despite the minimal changes in Pasifika achievement statistics that were evident in both this research study and the literature (Campbell, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2012; Statistics New Zealand, 2013; Tuioti, 2002), participants were of the view that Pasifika students were better catered for now than in the in the past. The reasons identified for this improvement were that schools were actively trying to be culturally responsive and making connections with their school communities through cultural celebration days and parent consultation evenings. However, although these events were great at bringing Pasifika parents into the school it is questioned in both the literature and this research study if these events did in fact improve the educational outcomes for students and help them to celebrate their identity as Pasifika (Siteine, 2013) .

Ensuring the school environment and the school culture fosters Pasifika achievement was the leadership practice that Pasifika participants identified as the one of the most crucial for improving Pasifika achievement. A successful environment was described as one that had a culture where staff believed Pasifika students could achieve and where students also had that self-belief. This is reflected in the literature by Brown et al., (2008) who found Pasifika teachers suggested that personal ownership of the educational system requires a sense of belonging and personal success. A key ingredient identified in this research study to building a school culture that fosters Pasifka achievement was one where there was mutual respect and trust between schools and families - reciprocity. The findings suggest reciprocity is the platform needed to build Pasifika success.

The role of reciprocity in building Pasifika Success

The second major theme to emerge from the data was the role of reciprocity in building Pasifika success. The sub-themes included in this theme are: the challenges in building authentic relationships between schools and Pasifika families; and the significance of reciprocity in building Pasifika success.

Challenges in building authentic relationships

Sustainability of change initiatives to improve Pasifika achievement was the major leadership challenge revealed in this research. The difficulty in achieving sustainability was especially evident in relationships between home and school. The findings show that while school leaders were perceived to understand that there was a need to build relationships with Pasifika parents and the Pasifika community, sustaining these relationships was difficult. Some of the reasons given for this included: initiatives that worked with one group of parents did not necessarily work another group of parents; parents were hard to get to come into the school; and some leaders were perceived to find it difficult to talk and build meaningful relationships with Pasifika families. Fullan (2003) argues, commitment to educational change or educational reforms requires creating conditions and processes that enhance the chances of getting people on board. This research indicates that school leaders had mixed success in getting Pasifika families 'on board' at school. Therefore change is needed in how these relationships are created and sustained so that the learning outcomes for Pasifika students are improved.

The findings show that although school leaders were well intentioned in building relationships, engagement with parents usually occurred when celebrating cultural events, when schools wanted feedback on programmes they had implemented, and when schools reported to parents on children's learning and programmes. Therefore most schools were using the first step of Cardno's model of collaboration - letting people know what is happening and accepting feedback (information), and seldom using the fifth step of collaboration - facilitating

parents taking part in policy and programme implementation as contributors and active participants (Cardno, 2012). Parental opinions were not actively sought. This imbalance of power in the relationships between school leaders and families was evident in the comment of a participant, *“Incorporate what the parents are saying because if you listen to them then they in return may listen to you... Principals always know what they want and need, always. But if they can slot in what the parents are asking for, it makes it a lot easier for the child.”*

The findings also reveal that Pasifika parents were sometimes viewed in the deficit mode. One participant commented, *“Sometimes I think management does tend to think that they know what’s best.”* Pasifika parents were sometimes perceived to have gaps in their knowledge, which schools attempted to rectify through their parent ‘consultation’ and information evenings. An unintended outcome of schools’ attempts at building connections with Pasifika families is what Cummins (2000) describes as *coercive relations of power* - when a dominant group (the ‘mainstream’, which schools represent) exercise power to the detriment of subordinated groups that are not mainstream (in this case Pasifika learners and their families). Participants in the study found that what schools were currently doing was not working because relationships between home and school were not authentic and Pasifika achievement was not improving. Therefore leaders must work harder at building relationships between schools and Pasifika families that are balanced and authentic.

Building on Pasifika aspirations for success

I have previously noted that participants in this research study perceived that more needed to be done to change the relationships between schools and parents because currently these relationships were not authentic and not reciprocal. The findings show that relationships between home and school were seen to be fundamental in improving Pasifika student achievement and that leaders were expected to acknowledge the role that families play in shaping their

children and to respect the trust parents place in school leaders and teachers. This view is confirmed in the literature by Tuioti (2002) and Alton-Lee (2003). The findings suggest that sometimes schools need to remember when building relationships with families to begin with the belief that everyone wants what is best for the child.

The first challenge for leaders and teachers revealed in this study is to relate with parents authentically and to deepen relationships that have already been established. The second challenge for school leaders is to have relationships that are *fealofani*. Relationships that are *fealofani* are ones where participants give each other mutual trust and respect. *Fealofani* is a Samoan word that means 'getting along'. *Fealofani* relationships are similar to Cummins' (2000) *collaborative relations of power* model, which he describes as generated through interactions with others. This in turn leads to the empowerment of participants through the collaborative creation of power. *Fealofani* relationships are reciprocal. Reciprocal relationships build on the strengths that each person 'brings to the table.' The findings and the literature show that changes have to be led (Scott, 1999).

Summary

This chapter has discussed the two themes that emerged from the data in relation to the literature presented in Chapter Two. The discussion has been concentrated on the themes of: (i) the importance of effective leadership for Pasifika achievement; and (ii) the significance of reciprocity in building Pasifika success. In Chapter Six I will summarise the key issues identified in the findings and draw conclusions in response to the research questions. Considerations in regards to the limitations of the study will be drawn and recommendations for future leadership practice and research will be made.

Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

In Chapter Five the findings were discussed with support from the literature reviewed, and in relation to the aims of this research. This final chapter will provide an overview of the research study, draw valid overall conclusions, evaluate any limitations of the study and make recommendations for further research.

An overview of the research study

The overall aims of this research project were to investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools; and to identify specific leadership practices perceived by Pasifika teachers as influencing Pasifika student achievement. Five key conclusions are presented here which are related to the two research questions that have guided this study. Due to the interconnectedness of the research questions the conclusions made can be used in relation to both questions.

Conclusions

Research question 1: What are Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership?

Conclusion 1

Pasifika teachers' experiences did not match their expectations of educational leadership.

This research concluded that Pasifika teachers' experiences of educational leadership in regards to Pasifika achievement did not always meet their

expectations. Participants expected their educational leaders to 'walk the talk' by practicing what they espoused. They also expected leaders to be authentic in their relationships with Pasifika students and their families. For some participants, particularly those who were school leaders, their expectations and experiences of educational leadership were often aligned. For the remaining participants their expectations of educational leadership did not match their experiences because they expected educational leadership to have made some difference in Pasifika achievement results. The lack of significant change caused some participants to feel sad, frustrated and resigned. Although participants in the study were educationally successful, they perceived themselves to be part of both the problem and the solution for improving the under achievement of Pasifika students.

Conclusion 2

Effective educational leadership is needed to improve learning outcomes for Pasifika learners.

This research concluded that effective educational leadership is needed to improve learning outcomes for Pasifika learners. Moral leadership that cares about Pasifika learners and Pasifika achievement is necessary. This research also highlights major challenges leaders face if they are to provide moral leadership in our schools. The first challenge for leaders is to confront how their personal values shape their behaviour and to explore how this influences the culture of their schools. Educational leaders who are in schools with Pasifika learners and learners from other cultures (whether they realise it or not) are answering what Waitere (2008) describes, as a "call to relationship" (p.45). Like moral leadership, cultural leadership requires all educational leaders to be explicit about the values and beliefs that underpin their leadership practice and actions (Waitere, 2008).

For Pasifika achievement to improve, changes must be made to some educational leadership practices. This research and the related literature acknowledge that sustainable change is difficult and requires leadership for caring, leadership for

learning, distributed leadership, leadership that is socially just and leadership that promotes cohesive diversity (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990).

Research question 2: What specific leadership practices do Pasifika teachers' perceive as influencing Pasifika student achievement?

Conclusion 3

Current leadership practices influence Pasifika achievement negatively and positively.

This research concluded that current leadership practices influence Pasifika achievement negatively and positively. This study found that although educational leaders use 'best practice' in schools to improve educational outcomes of students, these practices were not perceived to be making significant changes to Pasifika achievement. The reasons for this were varied. In the area of goal setting, most schools were using the 'top down' approach. Additionally professional development provided in schools did not help build teachers understanding of Pasifika learners or was offered only to Pasifika teachers. Resources and experiences provided in some schools did not meet the needs of Pasifika students.

Although the research found that there was a general concern regarding school engagement with parents, perhaps measuring engagement on the quality of the interactions rather than the quantity of parental turn out may change the perspective on whether these connections have been a success or not. This research study also found that Pasifika students were considered to be better catered for than in the past.

Conclusion 4

Leaders intentions have to match their capacity or capability to improve Pasifika achievement.

This research concluded that leaders intentions have to match their capacity or capability to improve Pasifika achievement, leaders have to 'walk the talk'. This means building an understanding of Pasifika learners through professional

development, including all stakeholders (students, teachers, parents) when setting the goals for Pasifika achievement, and being accountable for Pasifika achievement. If Pasifika achievement is not improving, constructive conversations need to be had with all the stakeholders so that solutions are explored and actioned.

Conclusion 5

Relationships with parents must be reciprocal.

Leadership is not only a call to action, but a call to relationship (Waitere, 2008). This research concludes that reciprocity is required to deepen the relationships between home and school. Mutual trust and respect are the foundation for reciprocal relationships. Reciprocal relationships build on participants' strengths. Collaborative rather than coercive relationships of power empower all participants (Cummins, 2000). What leaders have to acknowledge is that everyone (at school and home) has cultural capital. The best place to start when entering into reciprocal relationships is to begin with the understanding that everyone wants what is best for the child.

The Fealofani Model

The model depicted overleaf (Figure 6.1) is a leadership model that has been developed from the findings of this research. The colours in the model represent action, passion, love, (red) and genuineness (light brown). These elements are necessary to improve Pasifika student achievement. The use of the hibiscus is a nod to the Pacific. The shape of the model is a vessel. The vessel represents sustenance and movement. Sustenance is required to sustain changes needed to improve Pasifika achievement and movement is urgently needed to improve Pasifika achievement and to change the trajectory of Pasifika achievement.

Fealofani is a word my siblings often heard when we were growing up. Informally it means 'getting along'; formally it means reciprocal relationships between two or more people founded on mutual trust and respect. Reciprocity is dependent on all stakeholders participating in the relationship. Reciprocity grows and deepens the relationships between stakeholders. The stakeholders:

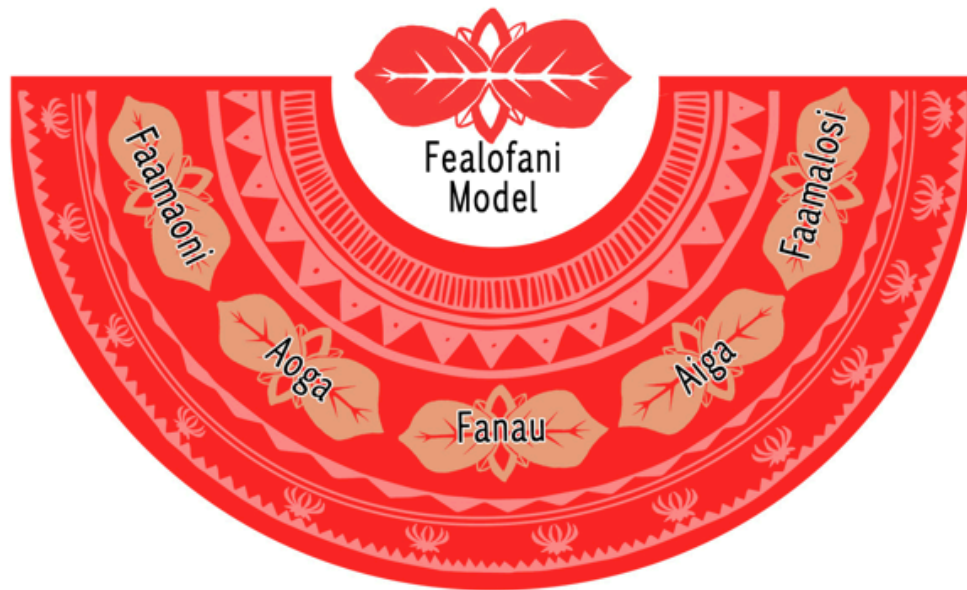
Aoga (the school), Fanau (children/off-spring) and Aiga (family) take on the mantle of leadership as needed and leadership is fluid. Relationships that are *fealofani* begin with everyday interactions of greetings and conversations. *The Fealofani model* requires the aoga, aiga and fanau to all demonstrate the values of *faamaoni* and *faamalosi*.

Faamaoni means dedication and perseverance. In this model *Faamaoni* represents genuine and sincere intentions to improve Pasifika achievement in an on-going way. This means moral leadership, leadership that cares. *Faamaoni* also requires the aoga, aiga and fanau to participate, be accountable and to take responsibility for Pasifika achievement.

Faamalosi means to strengthen. In this model *Faamalosi* represents action. Action is needed by the aoga, aiga and fanau to build their capacity and capabilities improve Pasifika achievement. This is done through relationships that are *fealofani*.

The Fealofani Leadership Model requires a balance of *Faamaoni* (good intentions) and *Faamalosi* (capabilities). One without the other will 'tip the boat over'. The heart of *The Fealofani Model* is reciprocity. *Fealofani* relationships involve 'giving' and 'taking' so that all the stakeholders, and especially our fanau are enriched, empowered and enjoy success. Improving Pasifika achievement requires putting into action the values we already know about. When we get along and show we are *fealofani* we all gain.

Figure 6.1 The Fealofani Leadership Model



Limitations of the study

The primary limitation of this research is the small number of research participants due to time and resource constraints of the researcher. Therefore the conclusions previously made may not be an accurate representation of the experiences, expectations and perceptions of Pasifika teachers in Auckland. Furthermore all the research participants were women so the research study does not offer male perspectives. However, this is somewhat mitigated when it is taken into consideration that males make up only 18 per cent of primary school teachers (Jones, 2014a). Therefore, the percentage of Pasifika males, would be even smaller.

The second limitation of the study was that the researcher did not ask participants what they perceived Pasifika parents wanted for their children. This would have strengthened the research as comparisons could then have been made between Pasifika teachers' aspirations for educational leadership and the views expressed by Pasifika parents.

The third limitation of the study was that more care should have been taken by the researcher when piloting the interviews to ensure that the questions 'flowed' better. This would have allowed the researcher to be more specific when asking

questions so that more time was spent listening to the interviewees, instead of the researcher having to clarify the questions asked.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have produced three recommendations for school leaders within the primary education sector in New Zealand. These findings may also be of relevance for teachers, Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education.

Recommendation 1

Faamaoni - Moral leadership, leadership that cares.

Moral leadership, leadership that cares, is needed to improve the learning outcomes of Pasifika learners. Leaders' intentions in regards to Pasifika achievement have to be authentic. Therefore this research study recommends that school leaders must place Pasifika achievement on the agenda. Moral leadership also means accepting accountability for Pasifika achievement. This tenet applies to school leaders, Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education. If school have Pasifika students then improving Pasifika achievement must be built into school appraisal systems so teachers can conduct inquiries into teaching practices that have worked to improve Pasifika achievement.

Recommendation 2

Faamalosi - Leadership that builds capacity and capabilities to strengthen teaching and learning.

This research emphasises the importance of building the capacity and capabilities of leaders so that they can in turn strengthen the capacity and capabilities of their teachers who will then do the same for their Pasifika students. Building capacity and capabilities mean actions that improve Pasifika achievement. If Pasifika achievement is not improving then alternative strategies have to be urgently sought and explored.

Recommendation 3

Fealofani - Mutual respect and trust, getting along.

This research emphasises the importance of school leaders establishing reciprocal relationships with Pasifika students and their families. These relationships may begin before students begin in primary schools with school enrolment processes which have a focus on sharing knowledge about the child, parents' aspirations for their children and the school's role on meeting these aspirations. This research understands that the establishment of reciprocal relationships is not easy to build and sustain but perseverance on the part of school leaders is vital to the improvement of Pasifika achievement.

Recommendations for future study

This research has found that effective educational leadership is vital to improving educational outcomes for Pasifika learners in primary schools. Participants in this study did not teach in bilingual or total immersion units. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study with Pasifika teachers in these units to see if the findings would be similar.

Final Conclusion

This research has added Pasifika teachers' voices to the body of research on Pasifika education. The ultimate aim of this research study was to identify leadership practices that can be adopted to improve the 'under achievement' of Pasifika students and accelerate Pasifika student success. This study acknowledges that Pasifika students walk in many worlds and can self identify with many groups.

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Appendix A



INTERVIEW GUIDE

Greetings: meet, greet and thank participants for their time. Go over the procedure for the interviews again.

Initial questions

- Please tell me about yourself.
- Please tell me about your teaching experience in New Zealand.

Intermediate questions

- What are your views about current Pasifika student achievement in schools?
- At the schools you have taught in, what do teachers say about the achievement of Pasifika students? What are their beliefs and attitudes?
- What have the principals and leaders in the schools you have taught in said about Pasifika student achievement? What were their beliefs and attitudes in your view?
- In the schools you have taught in, what role do school leaders play in influencing Pasifika student achievement?
- Did (or do) the school leaders in the schools you taught in have a positive or negative influence on Pasifika school achievement? In what ways?

Questions derived from leadership dimensions in Best Evidence Synthesis

- In the schools you have taught in, who has set the goals and expectations for Pasifika student achievement?
 - Were these goals a priority for the leadership and staff? How do you know?
 - How were these goals communicated to you?
 - Did teachers, parents and students know what the goals and expectations were?
 - Were these goals achieved or not achieved? How?
- In the schools you have taught in, do the principals and leadership team prioritise resource spending for Pasifika achievement? How? Was there sufficient resourcing?
- Have the leadership teams and principals in the schools you have taught in, improved the quality of teaching and the curriculum for Pasifika students? How?
 - Do they promote collegial discussions of teaching Pasifika students? How? How does it impact on Pasifika student achievement?
 - Do they observe in classrooms? How do they give feedback? Has the feedback been useful in improving your teaching and improving Pasifika student achievement?

- How is student progress monitored? Are assessment results used for improving Pasifika achievement?
- In the schools you have taught in, have principals established an environment that supports Pasifika achievement? How?
 - Have you worked in schools where the environment does not support Pasifika student achievement? Describe these environments?
 - Have the school leaders tried to change this? How?
- In the schools you have taught in, how have leaders created connections within school and out of school to improve Pasifika achievement e.g. with:
 - the different groups within the school
 - families and the community
 - schools students transition from or to
- If the answer to this question is “no” ask –How many schools have you taught in where leaders have not created connections within and out of school to improve Pasifika achievement? Did you or other staff members try to change this state of affairs? How?
- In the schools you have taught in, do leaders participate in constructive problem talk about Pasifika student achievement i.e. do they examine how they and others might be contributing to the achievement results of Pasifika students? Why/ why not?
- In the schools you have taught in, how do you think the principals and school leaders make decisions on what programmes to use in classrooms? Do these programmes improve Pasifika student achievement?

Concluding questions

- What school leadership practices do you think positively influence Pasifika student achievement? Which of these would you say is most important? Why?
- In the schools you have taught in what leadership practices have impacted negatively on Pasifika student achievement? Which of these has had the greatest impact? How?
- What conditions are needed to improve Pasifika leadership?
- If you had the opportunity to advise principals and school leaders about improving Pasifika student achievement what would your advice be? What is effective school leadership?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

Additional question added by participants

What has been the greatest influence on your educational success?

Farewell: Thank participants for their time and remind participants transcripts will be sent for their approval and they have ten days after receiving their transcripts to withdraw from the study if they wish to.

Appendix B



Consent Form

Research event: Semi-structured interview

Researcher: Sepora Mauigoa

Title of thesis: Pasifika teachers' expectations, experiences and perceptions of primary school (Years 1-8) leadership practices that influence Pasifika student achievement.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also give consent for any findings from this study to be published in related education journals.

I also understand that I will be provided with a full transcript of my interview for checking before data analysis is started and that I must contact the researcher within 10 days after I receive the transcript if I wish to withdraw any data from the summary.

I am aware that I may withdraw myself or any information I have provided for this project up to the stage when analysis of data has been completed.

2014

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed:

Name:

.....

Date:.....

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2014-1014

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from March 2014 to March 2015. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ethnicity.....

Place of

birth.....

Place of

schooling.....

Place of teacher

training.....

Years of teaching

experience.....

Decile rating of current school employed

at.....

Role in school (or

schools).....

Appendix C



INFORMATION SHEET

Title of thesis: Pasifika teachers' expectations, experiences and perceptions of primary school (Years 1-8) leadership practices that influence Pasifika student achievement.

Talofa lava. My name is Sepora Mauigoa and I am enrolled in the Master of Education and Leadership degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology. I am seeking your help in meeting the research requirements of the thesis course that is the final part of the degree.

Aims of project

1. To investigate Pasifika teachers' expectations and experiences of educational leadership in primary schools; and
2. To identify specific leadership practices that are perceived by Pasifika teachers as influencing Pasifika student achievement.

What I am doing

My intention is to interview 8-10 Pasifika primary teachers in Auckland to collect data relating to the above aims. I will be using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are based upon open discussion and a flexible interview schedule.

What it will mean for you

I request your participation in a semi-structured interview. The interview will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour and will take place at an agreed time and venue suitable for you. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. However, because of the schedule to transcribe interviews and complete the thesis, any withdrawals must be done within 10 days after you receive the transcript.

Your name and any information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file on my computer and only you, myself and my supervisors will have access to this information.

Please contact me if you need more information about the project at seporam@live.com or on 021 231 2787. If you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor at any time. My supervisor is Alison Smith, phone 815 4321 ext. 8411 or email asmith@unitec.ac.nz

Warm regards,
Sepora Mauigoa

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2014-1014

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from March 2014 to March 2015. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.